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Foreword

THE GREATEST fact of the history of the American Republic is the stability of its form of government. It is extraordinary that a system which could be applied to the little group of seaboard colonies in 1789 is not completely outmoded today.

Many reasons could be found for the success of the edifice which the authors of the Constitution created, but the one which is undoubtedly more important than any other is the device of the balance of power. Most of the political troubles in the world have resulted from the over-concentration of power in an individual or group — such as the army, the church, the rich, or even the majority. In this country the balance of power between the state and national governments and, in the latter, between the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive, has prevented any individual or group from seizing too much power for an extended period.

Madison, who probably had more to do with the wording of the Constitution than any other member of the Philadelphia convention, was a profound student of the history of republics: he was familiar with the causes of the downfall of the Greek and Roman republics, as well as with the development of the philosophy of liberalism in England and in France. He knew that democracies usually fell prey to the ambitions of demagogues and, in the *Federalist*, carefully explained the advantages

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of the republican form of government (with its checks and balances) over democracy, or unrestrained majority rule.

Actual democracy, in a state of any size is, of course, an absurdity, because it never comes about that all of the people or even a majority of the people have the same desire at the same time. What actually happens is that the real ruler offers them, from time to time, a choice, and usually does so in such a way that the choice is made in advance. Hamilton wrote in the *Federalist*: "History will teach us . . . that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing demagogues and ending tyrants."

It has often been said that Washington's character won the revolution, and it might be said, with equal truth, that his character translated Madison's theory into an accomplished fact. There is no doubt that Washington could have been President for life and could have usurped the legislative and judiciary functions with little difficulty. His career is possibly the greatest example of self effacement in history. His retirement at the end of his second term and his farewell address provided bulwarks for American liberalism. In the address he particularly stressed the importance of maintaining the balance of power saying:

> It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those intrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres; avoiding in the exercise of powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness

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> to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the Guardian of the Public Weal against invasions by others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the People, the distribution or modification of the Constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Under John Marshall the Supreme Court became a strong arm of government and the balance of power became an established fact. It can be debated whether the Constitution specifically conferred the function of judicial review upon the Supreme Court, but Marshall gave it this interpretation, and, since his time, the right and duty of the Supreme Court to pass upon the Constitutionality of Acts of Congress has been uncontested.

The balance of power has been threatened a number of times, but the fundamental sanity and love of liberty of the American people has always restored equilibrium. Once it was necessary to fight a civil war to preserve the basic form of the union, and on frequent occasions parties and factions have attempted to disturb its peaceful functioning, but balance has always been restored in time to avert disaster.

In the perspective of history the present moment will probably be appraised as one of those times when the balance of power just escaped being destroyed. The over-

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whelming majority which re-elected Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 apparently convinced him that he had received a mandate from the people to alter the basic form of our government. Acting on this conviction, he formulated plans to destroy the independence of the Supreme Court, to reorganize the executive departments, and, without consulting the wishes of Congressional leaders, drafted a series of bills designed to appropriate for the national government certain functions which have always been reserved for the states.

It is now apparent that the President misinterpreted the election. The people were voting in favor of a continuation of prosperity, not in favor of a reform of our basic principles of government, and a good many of them were voting against the Republican party, because of its failure to formulate a sound and constructive program.

There has been ample evidence to substantiate this view. The unfavorable report of the Senate Judiciary committee on the court bill proved that a cross-section of the people did not favor such a change, for there is not the slightest doubt that the Senators who composed this important committee knew that their constituents were back of them.

The hullabaloo which was raised by the Black incident is further proof that the majority of the people want a real Supreme Court. Justice Black has become a living guaranty of the integrity of the Court: so long as he remains on the bench any attempt to change the size or functions of the court is bound to result in failure.

The President's attempt to alter our basic governmental conditions, with the obvious implication that economic and social changes were to follow, atrophied capital investment, the life blood of industry, and

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brought on a financial panic and important business recession. There exists today an opportunity for the President to recognize the fallacy of his interpretation of the election (only a blind man could fail to see it), acknowledge his mistake, and reverse his practise. If he follows this course, his mistake will be very quickly forgotten and forgiven. Since the business recession seems to be concentrated in the production rather than the consumption industries, a renewal of capital investment would quickly change the direction in which the tides are running, and restore the prosperity which the people so earnestly desire.

Regardless of the course which the President adopts, the danger of a destruction of the balance of power has passed. There is probably not a member of Congress today who would be willing to introduce a bill designed to increase the membership of the Supreme Court. Efforts to increase the regulatory functions of the national government will meet with stubborn resistance in Congress and, even if such a bill as the Black-Connery is finally passed, it will be in emasculated form. No governmental reorganization bill which increases the powers of the President could be enacted today.

Once again the basic principle of American liberalism has just escaped destruction. Perhaps such tragic experiences as civil wars and industrial depressions serve a purpose when they test the vitality of our form of government.

J. P.

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The Further Course of Neutrality

HAROLD B. HINTON

THE development of American willingness, under force of circumstances, to undertake once more an active part in the affairs of the world at large, as evidenced by the presence of an official delegation sitting in Brussels with representatives of other powers trying to regulate the Far Eastern crisis, is probably of greater long-range importance than the actual results achieved at that gathering. It may well be that the country is entering a new epoch of its history, even though public opinion seems generally to lag behind the coöperationist philosophy of President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull.

Since the day of his first inauguration, Mr. Roosevelt has hoped and, on occasion, sought to project his New Deal beyond the frontiers of his own country. His efforts thus far have been rebuffed or ignored by the rest of the world and his initiative has undoubtedly been restricted by lack of encouragement at home. In the "good neighbor" portions of his first inaugural address, in his message to the heads of all the countries in the world, in his speech at Buenos Aires a year ago, in his Constitution Day speech last September, and more recently at Chicago, the President has indicated that he believes this country could and should come out of its shell and exercise its influence for peace.

His fellow countrymen, of course, favor peace, but they are still shy of any plan for coercing peace. "Collective security," "economic sanctions," and such phrases still ring in American ears as threats of entanglement in another foreign war. The Administration appears to understand this frame of mind, and may be expected to

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move cautiously. Thus far, there has been no evidence of any such zeal as inspired Woodrow Wilson to undertake, singlehanded, the reform of the world.

Mr. Hull has repeatedly described the country's official policy as a middle-of-the-road course between extreme internationalism and extreme isolation. Mr. Roosevelt views the problem as one of prevention rather than of cure. The best and surest way to keep the country out of war is to see that no war breaks out. The moral force of the United States should be associated with that of other peace-loving nations to prevent war through mediation of disputes and by arousing popular opinion in favor of peace throughout the world.

Of course, the plain fact is inescapable that the threats of war come from sources not likely to be persuaded or intimidated into peace by mere words. Thought must be given to what the United States can or will do if persuasion and mediation have no effect. Quite wisely, however, officials have kept silence on this aspect of the matter. They do not desire to cross any bridges until they actually come to them.

Newspaper and other comment on the President's foreign course has indicated thus far a sort of uneasy vote of confidence. Those pessimists who see in the present situation a deadly parallel to 1916 are outnumbered by those who think that war can be prevented and that such a task is infinitely lighter and more grateful than the business of keeping us out of a going war.

In some ways, it is unfortunate that the Brussels meeting and the special session of Congress had to take place at the same time. Had the foreign situation been the only problem on the President's mind, he would doubtless have let Congress await its regular meeting date in January, by which time the conference's accomplish-

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ments or delinquencies would have been past history, less vulnerable to Congressional oratorical attack.

As one of the few living men who can remember most of Miss Pearl White's predicaments as she struggled through the incredible *Perils of Pauline*, I believe I have reached an understanding of the average American's point of view about world affairs today. He is sitting through a sequence of utterly unbelievable, fantastic and yet horror-evoking episodes which unfold themselves in apparently endless succession, but he lacks the comforting assurance that everything will come out all right in the end.

For more than a year, now, the American public has had to look on at a show which puts the efforts of Miss White's early directors to shame. Their limited vision could not have conceived Almeria, Guernica, Shanghai, Canton, Nanking. These refinements have been reserved to the superior post-war civilization and to the march of military science. They are offered to us as a tiny sample of what the war toward which the world seems to be helplessly drifting will be like.

The outside world, sitting as a spellbound and impotent audience, took a long time to decide what, if anything, it could do about it all. The new Triple Alliance — Germany, Italy and Japan — seemed to have everything its own way. No response to this new form of *schrecklicheit* could have been conjured up overnight, and the other governments perforce temporized while their populations waxed ineffectually emotional.

Adolf Hitler, the naturalized Austrian house painter, and Benito Mussolini, the reformed Socialist newspaper editor, left no doubt of their mutual admiration and political solidarity. Premier Mussolini was hailed as the patron saint and inspiration of the National Socialist

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movement in Germany. He magnanimously conferred the supreme compliment on Chancellor Hitler, in acknowledgment of the honors showered on him, when he remarked, at the Munich review, "It was wonderful. It couldn't have been better in Italy."

While the other nations of the world uneasily took stock of the situation, these three new allies pressed positively on, secure in their thesis that communism is virulent, democracy powerless. The exchange of courtesies brought prominently into the open a cordiality of sentiment and a unity of purpose which had been officially voiced for months previously in Germany and Italy. Japan was included by mention and implication, its own spokesmen preferring to let deeds talk louder than words.

As long ago as last May, Count Galeazzo Ciano delivered a studied, prepared address on foreign policy to the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and the Italian Embassy in Washington has gone to some pains to distribute de luxe translations of it about this country. This circumstance, coupled with Count Ciano's relationship as son-in-law of the Duce and heir presumptive to the mantle of leadership, gives the speech the merit of a formal declaration of policy by the Italian government. Some of its phrases gain added significance from the events that have transpired since its delivery.

Complaining of the "gaps" in the London Non-Intervention Committee's arrangements to keep foreigners out of the Spanish war, Count Ciano reminded the Deputies that "we will respect our signed pledges with Fascist integrity." The speech, of course, was delivered some time after the conquest of Ethiopia.

He recalled Italy's efforts to "prevent the chasm opened by the Versailles Treaty from becoming unbridgeable," and found that "on more than one occasion

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the policies of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany have found themselves progressing along parallel lines."

"These last months," he continued, referring especially to the Spanish crisis, "have revealed that the parallel policies of the two great authoritarian states of Europe represent a most useful factor of security and peace, a beacon-tower towards which all the forces striving to safeguard civilization from the Bolshevik menace and to accomplish a lasting reconstructive task will continue to converge."

Enlarging the theme of Italo-German collaboration, Count Ciano declared that "it will be developed not only in the political field but equally in the economic one, and wheresoever the two great nations can display their vigilant sense of international responsibility." Not to forget the third, and relatively silent, partner in the coalition, the speaker added:

"Our relations with Japan have been strengthened by the spontaneous recognition of Italian sovereignty on the part of the Empire of the Rising Sun. Our friendship with Japan is long-dated and finds its raison d'etre [not only] (brackets and phrase mine) in the two peoples' reciprocal admiration for their industrious and military qualities, but also in the attitude openly adopted by the Japanese Government against the menace of Bolshevism and in defense of order."

The United States came in for a modest portion of the Foreign Minister's summation of policy.

"On our side," he said, "we would be happy if a better knowledge of our ideals and of our accomplishments kept the American public from being swayed by a propaganda whose origin and motives can be all too easily spotted."

Chancellor Hitler announced the same situation to the world in the speech he had read on his behalf to the an-

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nual Congress of the National Socialist Party at Nuremberg in September.

"The community of interests between National Socialist Germany," said the Fuehrer, by proxy, "and Fascist Italy has revealed itself in the last few months to be more and more an element for safeguarding Europe from chaotic madness. In the future, it will no longer be possible to disregard at any time and place the community of will.

"Our treaty with Japan serves the same purpose of unity in repelling an attack on the civilized world that today may come in Spain, tomorrow in the East and the day afterward somewhere else. We are filled with strong hope that other powers may understand the symptoms of the times in order to reinforce this front of reason for the protection of our peace and culture."

The "front of reason" was promptly "reinforced" by Portugal, the depot of Italian and German men and supplies for the Insurgents in Spain. The Portuguese Government, voicing what the Chigi Palace and the Wilhelmstrasse had not found politic to express, replied to Secretary Hull's declaration of policy of July 16 in a cynical and scornful tone. The Portuguese found Mr. Hull's insistence on observance of treaties and international obligations correct enough in principle, but completely lacking as a practical approach to the problems currently confronting the world.

The nations which had opposed German *Kultur* in the World war, and the Europeans who managed to stay neutral in that struggle, appeared to regard Herr Hitler's "front of reason" as something less than the guarantee of peace that it purported to be. They quite obviously did not know how to cope with this public announcement of incorporation of the "three outlaws,"

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which many of them had been politely trying to ignore.

The United States, especially, was stumped. The recurrence of fighting in China threw a severe strain on the Roosevelt administration's "good neighbor" policy. Added to the declarations of Messrs. Hitler and Mussolini, it spotlighted the evident fact that three of the world's great powers had no present intention of being good neighbors at all. They had even abandoned the pretext of being good neighbors. American "preachments," as Mr. Hull calls his periodic international admonitions, seemed to be having less than no effect.

Behind the routine work of urging American nationals to leave the danger zones in Spain and in China, and in aiding their evacuation by every means at his disposal, including the United States navy, Mr. Hull gradually stiffened his attitude. Personally, he was as shocked and resentful at the course events had taken as any American. He is a firm believer in the old-fashioned virtues of decency and reliability, which seemed to have been cast permanently into the discard in Europe and in Asia.

Handicapped as he was by the public opinion of his own country, the Secretary of State had to proceed more cautiously than he did at the time the Italians started their conquest of Ethiopia. Even mild intimations that the British Foreign Office had been kept informed of the usual steps this government was taking, and of its policy in regard to protecting its nationals in China, reinforcing its guard of Marines, and other details brought howls of rage from Anglophobes throughout the land. The United States was again, to use their phrase, pulling British chestnuts out of the fire.

Six so-called peace societies banded together to urge immediate application of the Neutrality act, the brand-new 1937 model, to the Asiatic situation. When it be-

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came known that a number of Bellanca airplanes had been shipped to China aboard a vessel owned by the United States government, these organizations bombarded Mr. Hull and President Roosevelt with open letters and telegrams, and a tired copy reader observed that "a telegram a day keeps the Bellancas away."

As far as could be judged from ordinary sources, however, the great mass of the public understood and approved its government's hesitancy. The Neutrality act was designed with a view to Europe, and was intended to keep this country from involvement in a war following the general lines and technique of the World war. As I pointed out in the Autumn number of the *North American Review*, its authors and sponsors considered "that a war in the Far East, between Japan and Russia, or between Japan and China, would be less likely to involve the United States than would a general mix-up in Europe."

For many reasons, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull did not want to put the Neutrality act into effect. They were saved from the immediate necessity of doing so by the language of the Act itself, which begins with the following direction to the President: "Whenever the President shall find that there exists a state of war between, or among, two or more foreign states, the President shall proclaim such fact."

This language was written into the Act of 1936, to replace the opening phrase of the Act of 1935, which mandatory and discretionary champions alike found unsatisfactory. The earlier version read as follows: "That upon the outbreak or during the progress of war between, or among, two or more foreign states, the President shall proclaim such fact."

On the whole, it was considered that the later edition gave the President less "discretion" likely to involve the

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country in a foreign dispute. It was objected that the phrase, "upon the outbreak or during the progress of war," gave the Chief Executive a leeway under which he could, by delaying his proclamation sufficiently long after the "outbreak" of war, give a substantial advantage to one side or the other. Under the new language, to which Senators Nye, Clark, Bone, Vandenberg and the other "mandatory" schoolists gave their full assent, it was presumed that the President, acting in the good faith which must always be attributed, in the absence of proof to the contrary, to the nation's chief magistrate, would have no difficulty in recognizing when a bona fide war started.

That was the rub. Even had Mr. Roosevelt desired to bring the Act into operation, it would have been very difficult for him, at least at the beginning of hostilities in North China, to declare that there existed a state of war between Japan and China. Both of the principals firmly denied that they were at war. They maintained ordinary diplomatic relations and went through the motions of negotiating a peaceful settlement of their dispute. It hardly looked the place of a neutral to step into the breach and inform them both, and the world at large, that they were mistaken — that they were actually and formally at war, whether they thought so or not. Can we imagine how public opinion in this country would have liked it if Great Britain, for example, had declared that we were at war with Mexico when General Pershing took his unfortunate expedition across the Rio Grande to chase Pancho Villa?

Under normal conditions of international law, that sort of thing is not done. Outsiders courteously look aside when two countries get into a quarrel, until one of them is sufficiently enraged to declare war, or at least to break

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off diplomatic relations, thus making it clear that no pacific settlement is longer considered possible.

To the layman, a fair-sized war seemed to be in progress. But to the statesman, war is such a solemn and irreparable step that its very existence must be denied as long as possible, in the hope that a settlement will be reached. In the Asiatic situation, there was precedent for this hope.

Just five years earlier, the Japanese had launched large-scale military operations against Shanghai, as a prelude to the Manchurian invasion. Desperate fighting went on for weeks. Suddenly, however, an adjustment was made that was officially satisfactory to both sides, and there never had been a war. If either China or Japan had, at that time, acknowledged that a formal war was in existence, the red-tape of ending the conflict through a peace conference and formal treaty would have prolonged the fighting unduly.

To all inquiries, Mr. Hull replied that he and his helpers intended to prevent American involvement in foreign war by using any tools that offered. The Neutrality act was merely one of several tools, and would probably be the last to be employed, after all hope of averting war had been given up. He reminded his critics that the Neutrality act was a piece of domestic legislation, laying restrictions on our own nationals with the sole object of preventing the country from being dragged into a war not of its own making. It was never intended to be a punitive measure to help one disputant or to hinder his opponent.

What he could not discuss publicly, of course, was the actual effect the invocation of the legislation would have had on the conflict itself. First of all, had the President issued his proclamation that a state of war existed be-

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tween Japan and China, all exports of "arms, ammunition or implements of war" would have been automatically prohibited from leaving these shores with either of those countries as a destination.

The Japanese had plenty of "arms, ammunition or implements of war." They were buying in this country only scrap iron and steel, which would not have come under the definition of "arms, ammunition or implements of war." The Chinese were highly deficient in these commodities, and presumably would buy them in this country, if at all. The first effect of the Neutrality act would have been to cut off from a friendly nation the opportunity of supplying itself with weapons to resist what it considered its aggressor.

Another automatic consequence would have been the prohibition of loans to either belligerent, except "ordinary commercial credits and short-time obligations in aid of legal transactions and of a character customarily used in normal peacetime transactions." Although there was some slight question that the recent silver arrangement the Treasury had made with the Chinese government might fall under this ban (and that seemed, to interested officials, to be a far-fetched interpretation), this section would have had little practical effect. Neither government was floating bond issues in this country.

American vessels would have been prohibited from transporting arms, ammunition or implements of war to either belligerent. In effect this could only have handicapped the Chinese for, as pointed out earlier, the Japanese were not buying arms here in any quantity. President Roosevelt anticipated this section of the law by ordering Government-owned vessels, of which three or four are operated on Pacific routes, not to carry such cargoes, and by warning masters of privately owned

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ships that they could transport arms only at their risk.

A Presidential proclamation of a state of war in China would also have automatically rendered it illegal for any American national to travel on board a ship of Japanese or Chinese registry. This was the sole portion of the automatic features of the law which would have worked to the disadvantage of Japan. Japanese ships carry a good deal of the passenger traffic of the Pacific, between this country and the Orient.

The rest of the law, including the celebrated "cash and carry" section, would have come into effect only at some later period, at the discretion of the President. Officials, of course, gave much thought to the probable effect this section would have on American commerce in the Far East, and were unable to reach any conclusions. It remained as much a subject of conjecture as it was when the law was passed.

Section 2 (a) of the Act authorized the President, at any time after he had proclaimed a state of war or civil strife to exist anywhere in the world, to forbid exports of any commodities he saw fit aboard American vessels, with destination in a belligerent state or in a neutral state for transshipment to a belligerent. Section 2 (b) permitted him to prohibit all exports to belligerents unless and until all right, title and interest therein had been transferred to some foreign national. These two provisions represent the new territory into which the Neutrality act of 1937 ventured, territory that the two preceding laws feared to enter.

It must be noted that they both depend entirely on the discretion of the President, although the general movement at the time of their adoption appeared to be in favor of "mandatory" legislation. He is authorized to take both steps only when he shall "find that the placing of

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restrictions" on American cargoes or on exports in general (and the two findings could be made separately) "is necessary to promote the security or preserve the peace of the United States or to protect the lives of citizens of the United States."

Both portions of the law resulted from a compromise between the "mandatory" philosophy of the Senate and the "discretionary" ideas of the House. It was clear during the debates in Congress that the list of commodities the President would forbid to be shipped on American vessels was intended to coincide with belligerents' definitions of contraband. The experience of neutrals in the World war, when the British and the Germans, between them, declared every article of ordinary utility to be contraband, was the ancestor of this part of the law.

However, this limitation was not written into the law, for obvious reasons. It would be impossible, or at least inadvisable, to notify every prospective belligerent in advance that all he had to do was to declare anything contraband for its transport by American ships to be prohibited by law. The net result of the language adopted is that the President holds the widest conceivable latitude. In the Sino-Japanese dispute, for example, it would make an enormous difference whether or not he forbade the transport of cotton.

Cotton is a versatile commodity. It can be used in the manufacture of a wide range of articles, from diapers to TNT. Should formal war be recognized in the conflict between Japan and China, the Chinese might, and probably would, declare cotton contraband. If the theory of the Congressional debaters were carried to its logical conclusion, President Roosevelt should then forbid American ships to carry cotton to Japan.

Japan buys the principal portion of the exportable

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cotton surplus of this country, and sells raw silk, which is not grown here at all, in exchange. That particular trade is one of the "cleanest" transactions in all international commerce, in the sense that it comprises an exchange of non-competitive surpluses for undisputed mutual profit.

The possibility of forbidding that normal commerce to American ships and of placing it on a "cash and carry" basis in general is written into the Neutrality act, and the most ardent advocates of that legislation undoubtedly intended that both of these things should be done. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the prime purpose of the Neutrality act is the self-protection of the United States.

As a practical matter, there would be little danger that Chinese submarines would sink American vessels carrying cotton, or would destroy American cotton being transported by foreign ships, in the event China and Japan were at war. There would be considerable danger of destruction by Germany in the case of a European war, as American shippers and exporters learned in the period from 1914 to 1917. Viewing the Act as a purely precautionary measure, therefore, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull would be amply justified in declining to apply either of those measures.

The "peace-at-any-price" group which started the "neutrality" movement, however, seems to have lost sight of their original goal. Senator Nye publicly urged invocation of the law against Germany and Italy, not on the ground that the United States was likely to be drawn into war because of those governments' activities in Spain, but on the ground that their interference in the internal affairs of Spain should be punished, and this was all the United States could do.

Similarly, the cry for invocation of the Neutrality act

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in the case of Japan and China has not, thus far, sprung so much from a fear of involvement of the United States as from a desire to punish Japan.

Thus, the "neutrality" movement may be said to have completed a cycle. Originally conceived as a means of keeping the country strictly to its own business, with no concern in the affairs of others, a storm cellar to which to repair in time of cyclone abroad, it is now revealed as a possible cause of most flagrant interference in foreign quarrels and a potential source of embroilment such as no country has ever written on its statute books.

Because of a limitation placed in the law by Representative Shanley of Connecticut, when the 1937 bill was before the House of Representatives, the "cash and carry" section expires in 1939. Thus the whole law must come up for review at that time, automatically, because the most ardent of its champions would not consider letting it stay in existence with that portion lapsed.

We shall see efforts to tighten the Act by defining more closely the circumstances under which the President must declare that two nations are at war. We shall see efforts to make him automatically put into effect the "cash and carry" section, embodying the doctrine of transferred risk, and to forbid American ships from carrying any commodity which any belligerent may decide to call contraband. In the perhaps brief breathing spell that is permitted to it, the American public ought to give all the thought it can to these complexities. Abstruse as they may appear at first glance, they might be the instrumentalities of war or peace for this geographically blessed land which now thinks it can never be dragged into a war against its will.

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The Dance — Pioneer American Art

JOHN MARTIN

WITH developments in the dance as significant and as widely recognized as they are at present in this country, it becomes difficult to realize that until comparatively recently the public at large had never even suspected the existence of such a thing as a specifically American dance art. Perhaps it is typical of our national humility where matters of art are concerned that it should have gone unclaimed for so long in spite of the fact that it has had repercussions more or less all over the western world and is actually a manifestation which for the profundity of its social and cultural implications is unique in modern times.

We had all heard, to be sure of somebody called Isadora Duncan, and some of the older ones of us had even seen her dance. Most of us, also, at one time or another of late years had been to an occasional performance of something called "modern" dance (or at least had seen a mention or two of it in print). But what either of them stood for or what relation, if any, they bore to each other (or to us!), it would never have occurred to us to inquire. The subject seemed, no doubt, utterly remote and beyond the limits of any possible concern of ours.

Whatever its seeming, however, the subject was not remote; it was and is, indeed, so close to our contemporaneous modes of thought and our present redirections of living that it could not possibly remain long in that twilight zone of unrecognition. Isadora Duncan and the so-called "modern" dance are not only inseparable from each other but also of deep concern to us, and

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this concern arises not so much because they constitute a native contribution to world art of which we may be proud in a partisan sense, as because they constitute the first art medium that we have evolved for interpreting our native culture to ourselves in our own terms.

It was Isadora Duncan who accomplished the great overturning which brought to light those principles of the dancer's art that take it out of the ranks of the trivial and the meretricious and reveal it as a medium of profound communication. No other artist of record has produced a change of comparable import or dimensions in any art, and there is no contemporary art that has not been in some measure, however indirectly, reoriented by her cleansing vision.

In essence what Isadora did was to clear out the boneyard of dynastic succession in which the dance labored in vain. It was impossible for her, free spirit that she was, to move among the skeletons of once warm and living theories from which the flesh had long since wasted away. The whole vast accumulation of arbitrary rules whose reasonable beginnings had been forgotten for generations, of routine practices made compulsory by nothing more convincing than custom, of prescribed materials invented with the aid of compass and straightedge, all this she discarded as being no more than an incubus upon the true art of the dance. She rejected passionately the substitution of codes dictated from without for the unhampered creative capacity of man.

As a result of such a radical departure from established practice, there were many changes in the external surface of the dance. It is important to recognize, however, that though we speak of them as changes, this does not imply that they were merely the doctoring up of old surfaces; they paid no attention whatever to surfaces,

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but working from an entirely new approach allowed new surfaces to appear as they would. None of Isadora's innovations was made in pursuit of novelty or fashion, or for any other cause than the dictates of inner necessity. They were functional changes rather than embellishments, inventions, concoctions of new styles.

Her dance did not spring full-blown in any miraculous manner; it grew logically out of her personal past and the larger impersonal past of her native environment. As a youngster she danced in a more or less conventional way, even though she had disturbing dreams of something beyond. In her teens we find her, still wearing ballet slippers, protesting to Augustin Daly that she hated dancing the role of a fairy in his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for she was not interested in vapid imaginings about a non-existent creature when there were all the burning passions of men to dance. This sounds anything but strange to us today, but in the late 'nineties it was sheer madness.

More and more, through personal hardship and varying experiment, she gave herself up to the search for a dance that would be an expression of these burning passions of men. For years she sought the center from which movement, dictated not by preconceived design but by emotional experience, arose in the body and extended itself over all the members. In this consecrated search she made the first correlation that has been made in modern times between the physical movement of the dance and the inner impulsions of the mental and emotional life, and on this basis the new dance has reared its entire superstructure. It was Isadora's conviction, which she was able to prove with unequaled eloquence, that whole patterns of movement vitalizing the body from head to foot were evolved, if nothing was put in their

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way, out of every deeply felt experience, and that the character and quality of such experiences were not only contained in such sequences of movement but heightened and clarified for the spectator. So sensitive was her mind and so magnificently attuned to it were her bodily reactions that she was able to convey in movement with overwhelming effect those intangible moments of high feeling which come to us all under unusual stimuli and find us speechless. It was not dying butterflies or wounded birds that elicited tremendous responses of deep emotion from her audiences, but the passions of men that she danced. For the first time since the days of classic Greece, tragedy and the exaltation of the spirit found a place in the dance.

For Isadora the dance was not a business of portraying characters, whether butterflies or more prosaic types; it was the dancer's function to express his own convictions, his own prophecies, his own glimpses of revelation, concerning the life of men as it moved about him. When she danced of death it was not a picture of some person dying, but her own reaction to death as she had met it in life. Even when she danced so specific a thing as an appeal to America to enlist in the World war in aid of France, it was not as a recruiting agent or a soldier or a personification of France itself, but as a projection of Isadora Duncan's reaction to the peril to civilization which she saw threatened in the destruction of French culture.

Obviously, in such a scheme of art it is essential that the artist's reactions be worthy of expression, and not merely that he be a pleasing person with a facile body. He must become, in a sense, his own convictions made flesh, and in these convictions must dwell, as Michael Gold has written recently in a superb tribute to Isadora, "an ultimate faith in the body and spirit of man."

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The vocabulary of movement of a dance art based on the expression of life experience must obviously bear a close relation to life movement. When one makes gestures in life in order to clarify meaning, one does not describe careful arcs in the air, balancing them to the right and left, but lets the meaning that is to be clarified dictate the shape and form of the gesture. Such spontaneous life movement might very well have too much of the haphazard about it to be usable in art in its raw state, but would have to be refined, polished, made to yield up its essence, with all the tentativeness and waste of improvisation eliminated from it. But at its base, all expressive dance movement is natural movement; that is, movement that imitates neither external objects nor external patterns but flows outward from the emotional center of the body, so to speak. Since art is always a heightening of life experience, bent not merely upon presenting facts but rather upon interpreting them, life movements must be similarly heightened for use in the dance. They must be not merely presented but interpreted, given emphasis and form beyond what daily living reveals in them. Otherwise the dance is adding nothing to what the spectator might just as readily see all about him without any artist's aid. Dance movement, then, as Isadora revealed it, and as it is practiced by those who have come after her, is natural only in the sense that it stems from human impulse and is actuated by thought and feeling common to all men and hence recognizable by them as part of their own experience.

This makes clear at once certain differences in the vocabulary. There will be, for example, nothing in that vocabulary to deny the body, its weight, its mass, its relation to the earth. It will not be made to give illusions of floating through space, or of suspension in the air. Such

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experiences may perhaps belong in the background of fairies, birds, and butterflies, but not of men, and can do nothing accordingly to clarify life, to build that "ultimate faith in the body and spirit of man." Virtuosity for its own sake will likewise be absent, for the dancer is not trying to exhibit himself as a skilful person but is instead intent upon conveying his revelations of certain truths about the life of men. In so doing he is frequently called upon to perform passages of movement that are extremely difficult, but his accent will never be upon their difficulty and his conquest of it, but upon their function and content. He is concerned not at all with declaring his individual superiority but quite to the contrary with presenting himself as a kind of type of all men, one with their problems, their passions, their deep and abiding hopes.

This is at once the epitome of democracy and of its correlative in art, romanticism. The two have always gone hand in hand, and still travel in the same close fellowship. There are circles today in which both are considered old-fashioned and historically finished. There are other circles in which it is thought possible to reject romanticism without rejecting democracy along with it, but that is rather like accepting a man and rejecting his thinking, for romanticism is the voice of democracy.

It would be well to examine our attitude to romanticism, for it is a word whose meaning has been largely forgotten. It is employed carelessly to denote a number of secondary concepts with its primary concept unacknowledged; it is used to describe, for example, erotic attachment, sentimentality, swashbuckling adventure, mysticism, fairy lore and fantasy, and the worship of religious, patriotic and maternal loyalty. These can all be traced unquestionably to origins in romanticism, but

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they constitute its refuse; it is difficult to judge a tree by looking no higher than the rotten fruit which lies in the grass at its foot.

It would be a salutary thing for our cultural life if every so often we were to remind ourselves that the word "romance" refers first of all to a group of European languages and nothing more; that later it was applied also to tales written and sung in these languages, and eventually to the essential quality of these tales. Now wherein did these tales differ from other tales in the Middle Ages that they should be set apart? In the fact that they were tales of the people, growing out of their own lives and aspirations, and told in languages they could understand. The official art literature of the time was written exclusively in Latin, a language unknown to the people and kept alive far beyond its day by scholars and courtiers. This literature dealt with the lives and adventures of remote heroes, gods, and saints, and even if its words had been intelligible to the masses most of its content would have been dull and distant to them. The language of these new tales was the vernacular, their subjects the exploits of lovers and fair ladies, rogues and scoundrels, braggarts and fighters, who constituted in some part the actual bulk of the population but in larger part perhaps represented the ideals of this downtrodden section of society if only they could be free to do as they pleased.

In each of the arts there has been from time to time a progressive series of rebellions of this same sort substituting in part or in full the medium of the vernacular, so to speak, for that of the courts and academies. The great eighteenth century saw the birth of a movement in this direction of tremendous proportions which matured in the early years of the nineteenth century into something

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which has been called the romantic revolution. Art was seen then, by and large, in theory at least, to belong to the human spirit, not to rules and codes.

In the dance this movement was by no means backward. From the very moment when all the loose ends of the Renaissance ballet were first gathered together and codified, all the great leaders of the dance began to rebel against the restrictions of the code. Sallé, Noverre, Vigano, and later Fokine, fought valiantly insofar as their times permitted, for reforms in the interest of true romantic freedom of expression as against formalism, and their results were notable. But they were all merely reformers, trying to patch up an approach to which they felt an unquestioning basic loyalty. The full result of the romantic revolution was not achieved until Isadora, with no loyalties and no attachments, threw out the entire code with all the reforms that had amended it, and started again from the basic principle of man's innate faculty for expressive movement. She ignored that phase of the dance art which was roughly equivalent to the Latin literature of an earlier day as if it had never existed, and began to create anew in terms of vernacular movement and on subjects of common experience.

There are those who find this kind of art vulgar in the broad meaning of that word, and in a sense they are right; democratic is really the same word in a different language. There are others who object to the emphasis which romanticism lays upon the salvation of the world, upon the betterment of the race, upon the attainment of ideals and the fulfilment of aspirations. Such a purpose they find too moralistic to have a place in art, for art is said to have no purpose except to be beautiful. The only difference between art and amusement, then, according to such a theory, is that the one is a rarefied form of the

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other, demanding for its enjoyment more knowledge and taste, but serving the same function for different levels of intellect. This is what is sometimes called the classic view as opposed to the romantic, the aristocratic as opposed to the democratic. On its basis kings and courtiers have maintained ballets for their diversion, and today wealthy men of this opinion, whose tastes do not run to the outdoor life, keep companies of dancers instead of polo ponies.

On this basis, also, it is maintained that the "modern" dance is not of the theater, for it has nothing to offer in the way of gayety, color, youth, and bedazzlement. To which there is certainly no answer if by the theater is meant "show business." It is not a medium for show, admittedly, though that can scarcely exclude it from the theater. Happily, the theater consists of more than Noel Coward and the *Follies;* it also embraces Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and Wagner; Stanislavsky, Meierhold, and Craig. On the roster of this great heroic theater it is inevitable that we include also the names of Duncan, Wigman, Graham and Humphrey.

But having thus sketched in a hasty analysis of the purposes and processes of this kind of dance, it would perhaps be well to consider with what authority it can be called American; especially so, since now there has slipped in the name of Mary Wigman who is certainly not American. The gist of the argument must already be evident, but a few points remain to be made.

To chant the greatness of the American dance, is to risk being placed at once in the category of the patrioteer, and accordingly either cheered lustily or despised openly, depending upon the temper of the gathering. And this is a logical reaction for two reasons. The dance has been accepted in toto for so long as a sterile thing devoted

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completely to the piffling business of after-dinner entertainment that there is likely to be something ludicrous in the notion that greatness is possible for it anywhere. Besides this, the idea of a great American art of any kind is certain to sound strange to a world trained to believe (and with strong evidence to go on) that no American work could ever be other than derivative.

Such reasons, however, are no longer valid, for developments in the dance during the past decade have made it possible to see in a more universal light the thing that Isadora Duncan accomplished nearly forty years ago. This was an epochal thing which not only brought into being the American dance (though that is important enough in itself, in all conscience), but also revealed in it the foundation upon which, in accordance with all historical and anthropological precedent, the other arts in the American culture must be built. Until we understand the American dance, therefore, and give it its proper evaluation, we cannot expect to understand or evaluate, much less create any other American art, or even to know what such an art can be expected to stem from or to look like.

To substantiate so radical a statement, it is necessary to consider what elements must underly anything that can legitimately be called American art without benefit of flag-waving. The discussion must become at once something more profound than an international debate as to which country's team holds the record for *fouettés* and *tours en l'air* or who was first to dance to a Bach fugue, as if some choreographic Davis Cup were at stake; for it concerns patriotism and loyalties not at all but touches the roots of culture and emphasizes the indispensable relation of art, and especially dancing, to the normal life of a healthy civilization.

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There is no doubt that out of the wave of nationalism that has swept the world in this generation we have been made aware of the existence of something known as American art; but because of the stupidity of the movement out of which this awareness has developed as a casual by-product, it is only natural that it should be a stupid awareness (if such a phrase is not too grievous a paradox). The most obvious aspect of it is that since many persons in America practice art, then by normal processes of reasoning, their product is automatically American, just as the product of an American steel mill is American. But there is a difficulty in this argument, for in the case of steel manufacture the end result is fixed in advance, and the agent can be who he may — Lithuanian, Cambodian or Eskimo. In the practise of art, the end result is determined entirely by the agent, his personal temperament, his background and environment. Whatever is turned out in America will be American, it is true, according to the interpretation of the customs house, but whether it will be so in a broader sense will depend upon a great many things besides citizenship.

Even the most ardent nationalists recognize this distinction, and sometimes run it into the ground with their insistence upon hundred per cent American (by which they usually mean Anglo-Saxon) names for all artists whom they are willing to recognize as American, citizenship or no citizenship. This type of argument is too blatant to do much injury to a fair understanding of what American art is and what makes it American. There is a more subtle and damaging theory that is likely to be accepted by that casual multitude which takes its art doctrines with as little thought of questioning as it does its religion. They have been given to believe, for example, that any work of art which deals with a recog-

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nizable American locale is American art, and any art which does not do so is not. The result of this has inevitably been that all of this recent so-called American art has been in the literary and graphic fields, for music and dance do not normally deal with specific locales.

Some of the trouble here has undoubtedly grown out of the regional movement in painting, and it is assumed that if Grant Wood or John Steuart Curry or Charles Burchfield ceased to depict local scenes they would cease to turn out American canvases. As a matter of fact, these men have unquestionably found inspiration in local scenes, but it is the quality of their inspiration rather than the scenes that puts the American element into their work. If any of them should decide to paint Mont Blanc or the Taj Mahal or a group of Volga boatmen, with the character of their present honest and unimitative approach, the results would be so impregnated with native comment that they would fairly teem with the quality of American art. They are not American artists because they have determined to paint American scenes, but they have in all probability determined to paint American scenes because they are American artists, and are fully aware, as no other artist is likely to be, of the inherent beauties of those scenes and the strong reactions they evoke.

Let us take an example in the dance world which is the inverse of this. Several years ago, Leonide Massine, accomplished choreographer that he is, undertook to create an American ballet for the De Basil Ballet Russe. It was called *Union Pacific*, and its scenario, written by an American, dealt with the building of an American railroad. It had, also, an American stage designer and an American costume designer. In other words, the locale was a hundred per cent American. As it happened the

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music was by a Russian, but even if it had also been by an American the result would scarcely have been changed. The creative part of the ballet, the type of movement and its arrangements, was Massine's own, and it lacked totally and completely any quality that could possibly have been mistaken for American. As a European whose impressions of America were necessarily superficial, even so talented a man as Massine could not be expected to hit upon that elusive something that underlies the surface of the idiomatic thing, to arouse that sense of recognition upon which the enjoyment of a work of art is based.

In contrast, there was Isadora Duncan, dancing in pre-Raphaelite draperies, or a classic tunic, in a style that people liked to call "revived Greek," to the music of Gluck, Wagner, Chopin and Tchaikovsky, and notwithstanding all these alien influences being the very epitome of American art.

When everything is duly weighed in the balance, it is certain that we shall have to rule out the matter of locale and all other superficial elements as determining what is and what is not truly American art. Subject matter plays only a minor part, at best, in art; it is content that counts, and content is what the artist succeeds in projecting of his own mind and spirit. If it is a mind and spirit shaped and colored by the background and environment of American life, it will be an American work of art that results, no matter what subject matter happens to have inspired the projection.

It is probably because we are accustomed to considering ourselves a young nation with no background except what lies in the old world, that we are so prone to overlook the unique quality of our own culture. When we consider the cultures of the old world, we are considering

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a slow and steady growth of traditional thinking that has been handed down from generation to generation in a stream whose source is lost in the very obscurity of the origins of civilization. Not so with us. Our culture, for all that its roots are ultimately in this same ancient stream, is more a selective matter. Our country was settled not by expansionists seeking territory where they might carry on as before, but by hardy idealists consumed with the purpose of changing the accepted way of life. No doubt this was vulgar and moralistic of them, and in order to be acceptable they should really have come over only for the boatride; but since that was not the case, we shall have to make the best of their unenlightened attitude. We certainly cannot alter it now, for it has shaped our entire development as a nation, put its mark upon all our institutions, and given direction to all our thinking.

The Pilgrim fathers would scarcely have seen any relation between their intrepid expedition into the unknown and Isadora Duncan's battle for freedom to express the passions of men, but she saw the kinship clearly, and pronounced herself wholeheartedly a Puritan. The settlement of the new world was a battle of action, rather than of expression, but it was fought for exactly the same goal of freedom for the passions of men. The land and the life upon it were dedicated to the integrity of these passions, and to their preservation against the oppression of codes and systems of thought and conduct — political, religious, social — imposed upon them from without. Here in essence was a practical political realization of the doctrine of freedom enunciated by the Reformation and by all the great thinkers whom it set free to speak.

When a century and a half later our national forefathers, goaded by that most unsung of heroes, Samuel

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Adams, separated from the British crown, it was not fundamentally for any such trifling causes as taxation without representation, or stamp acts, but was the result of that same singleness of vision which had first caused the Mayflower to weigh anchor. It would have been inconceivable for the American colonies to act in any other way than as they did, whatever their treatment by the English king.

There were three revolutions under way in the eighteenth century in the old world as well as the new, and they were in effect but three phases of one revolution, whose aims were epitomized in the very concept of America. It would be unorthodox but accurate to call this tripartite revolution under the single eminently descriptive name which only one of them officially bears, namely, the romantic revolution. The political and social overturnings which enfranchized the burghers and gave birth to what we call modern democracy, the advent of the machine and the industrial changes that have been following ever since in the struggle for the liberation of men from slavery to toil, and those changes in the thinking of artists and philosophers which brought the romantic movement as such to a climax, all have as their common goal the assertion of "ultimate faith in the body and spirit of man." They are all manifestations of the same impulse that led much earlier to the telling of those tales in the vernacular which we call romances; they are, indeed, what we might call "vernacular" manifestations, as the very idea of America itself is also.

Never having had an academy, an arbitrary authority, a superimposed code of any sort, American art is automatically of this character. If we have any national trait, it is a love for debunking, for cutting through boldly to the heart of things, for getting back to first principles

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wherever possible. We are not subtle or suave in our thinking, as any of our foreign friends will tell us, but direct sometimes to the point of rudeness. We infinitely prefer action to theory; we like to see things work. And we like them to be large and functional things, rather than exquisite and useless ones. There is perhaps a good deal of the unpleasant Jean Jacques Rousseau in our background however violently our idea of the simple life departs from his. Sometimes it is said that we are overly practical, because we instinctively relate everything back to the nature of man and his needs, but as yet there has appeared no other criterion as dependable in any system for the regulation of human affairs.

Until Isadora Duncan appeared, the only art that we had produced which was indubitably American was the poetry of Walt Whitman, from whose great, sprawling, dynamic, vulgar, democratic vision of beauty Isadora herself drew such deep inspiration. But Whitman, for all his greatness, was something of an isolated phenomenon, a voice in the wilderness. The poet cannot be expected to reveal the underlying mechanisms of art, for his medium is itself already developed and redeveloped several times away from the ultimate source of art. This source, as becomes evident from a study of primitive cultures, is to be found in the reaction of the individual to emotional stimuli in terms of the most elementary instrument at his command, namely, his body. In the uninhibted dance of the savage are to be found the roots of all the arts. The poet comes much farther along in the scheme after the intellect has tempered the original impulse.

For the revelation of art in its fundamental state, then, we must look not to the poet, but to the dancer, and in the dance of Isadora Duncan we find the source manifesta-

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tions of our American arts, whenever and however they may develop. Her dance, to be sure, is on a higher level than the dance of the savage, as Isadora herself, though stripped to a comparable degree of emotional forthrightness, represents many cycles of advancement over the savage. The miracle is that in spite of these cycles she was able to penetrate through the accumulation of inhibitions to the soul of the problem of emotional expression. Actually she invented nothing in the process, but simply made herself a great transparency through which shone the essential spirit of her own people. On no other foundation can we build.

Once discovered, this principle of genuinely expressive art cannot be monopolized, any more than any other democratic principle can be. If it is perfectly logical that the discovery should have been made in America where from the beginning the ground had been prepared, it is just as logical that as a principle it should be subject to universal application. Once revealed it belongs to whoever can apply it. Certainly in the dance of Mary Wigman, for one, it has been notably applied, and the vast differences in result between her application and that of contemporary dancers in the American field only goes to prove the soundness, the sensitiveness, and the infinite adaptability of the principle itself. Though it is much to be desired that this dance be seen as an emanation of the American mind and as the beginning of America's truly native expression, it would be a calamity if it were hedged about with nationalistic boundary markings, its working basis treated as an exclusive property, its forms crystallized into another orthodoxy in which, as in the steel mill, the end result is determined in advance. It is the first chapter, not the last, in our creative national life.

Extraordinarily enough, there has been a wide re-

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sponse to this new and radical innovation among the arts. Thanks to the aggressiveness of its leaders, it has refused to starve in a garret swathed in self-pity like some puny estheticism, but has risen boldly as its hour has struck and conquered both the unwitting resistance of honest indifference and the occasionally active opposition of the stubbornly unregenerate. Because of its essential vitality and the demonstrableness of its tenets, it has won supporters who through the strength of their convictions have themselves become militant for the cause, and so the movement has progressed.

Certainly it has had no help at all from those sources to which one would automatically look for aid to an art. Not a single wealthy patron has as yet come forward with a look of subsidy in his eye; the smart set have passed it by for something with more chic and class appeal; the conventional dispensers of public entertainment at a profit will have none of it because it runs counter to all the conventional forms of entertainment dispensed at a profit. Why should any of these ladies and gentlemen take a chance on something that promises neither social prestige nor a box-office gross of a million dollars a year so long as Russian ballets and the like can still be imported from Europe?

Nevertheless, the American dance has prospered, and it has done it by means of deep-rooted conviction, which is apparently one of the things that is as potent as money. The leading native dancers have now found it possible to make tours of the country on the strength of the support which exists in the public itself, and have found large and eager audiences to prove their theory sound. As an absolutely democratic art it has discovered a democratic audience.

Significantly enough, the largest support has come

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from the young people, in spite of the fact that they are generally supposed to be interested in nothing nearer to art than hotcha. An amazing result of this is to be seen in the type of audiences at "modern" dance performances both in New York and elsewhere. They differ so widely from the usual silver-haired dowagers with their bald-pated escorts who fill the hall for operas, symphonies and imported ballets, that it would be safe to estimate that seventy-five percent of them are under forty and hundreds of them actually in their teens. It is almost unprecedented that youngsters in large numbers should voluntarily seek out a serious art (and this kind of dancing is decidedly serious); but it is not inexplicable when we consider that its basis of fundamental humanness gives vigorous support to the battle of present day youth against the sickening ritual of passivity, pretense and affectation which it has had foisted upon it as fitting cultural practice.

Another significant class of supporters is to be found among educators, and the result of this is that in colleges from coast to coast, where we are accustomed to find the teaching of the arts trailing at least a generation behind the times, this new type of dancing is being taught with increasing emphasis, even perhaps beyond the extent of its recognition in the usually more active world outside college walls. This, too, finds its explanation quite simply in the nature of the dance itself; for it has provided both an implicit philosophy and a practical medium for accomplishing that elusive purpose of education in its best sense of relating the mental and emotional life with its outward and physical manifestations. It is this that has introduced dancing into the schools in America on a scale unimagined in any country since classic times.

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Because of the institution of teaching dance principles in the schools, the next generation must inevitably bring to the work of its artists a fuller understanding of their purposes and accomplishments and a more sympathetic mind. Against such a background of mental support, it is only reasonable to suppose that the quality of the dance will be kept high and stimulated to go higher.

What the effect will be upon the rest of our art expressions it is impossible to guess, but if the stone walls of patronage which so effectually shield them at present from contact with life and progress can be pierced, there should be a tremendous effect, for new and demonstrable principles have been revealed which apply not only to the making of dance compositions, but to the whole process of externalizing emotional convictions in whatever medium. In these principles lie the means for restoring art to its inherent function in the life of man, for another victory of man over hierarchies according to the inherent character and tradition of the American scheme of life.

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The Lyon of Democracy

BERNARD MAYO

A SWIVEL gun booming from the deck of an Ohio river flatboat announced the arrival in western America, in the year 1800, of Colonel Matthew Lyon, "The American Martyr to Liberty." Bearded Kentuc boatmen sent up wild huzzas, and buckskinned farmers acclaimed the "Colonel-Editor" whose Jeffersonian radicalism during John Adams's presidency had spread far and wide his reputation as both the victim and "The Scourge" of aristocracy. Conservative eastern America had dismissed Lyon as "a strange offensive brute, too wild to tame, too base to shoot." But the democratic frontier, America's turbulent New West, took him to its heart and showered praises upon him as a Tribune of the People.

Matthew ("Roaring") Lyon, of Ireland, Vermont, and Kentucky, was in truth a Tribune of the People, in the American tradition later enriched by Sockless Jerry Simpson and Kingfish Huey Long. No politician of the early republic provoked so much alarm and laughter, or so many puns and bad verses, as did this rough-hewn hero of the famous "Spit and Cudgel Brawl" in Congress. He was an earthy creature, far from the conventional Revolutionary Father in silken smallclothes and lace furbelows. Yet he was more than a demagogue. He was a pioneer extraordinary, of varied adventures, who personified the robust optimism, the sweaty partisanship and restless barter, of those strident times when America was in the making.

"Irish Mat, the Democrat," had emigrated from Dublin in 1765, a lad of fifteen with a deep-rooted hatred of pampered aristocracy and of an England that had just

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executed his father for inciting evicted Irish farmers to rebellion. Lured on by tales of a Yankee skipper, Matthew had shipped as a cabin boy — bound for New York and the Promised Land. Coming over, he was robbed by the captain and reduced to the status of a redemptioner, a white slave destined to work out his transportation expenses after arrival. He fell ill and would have died but for some molls of the forecastle, who nursed him and restored his faith in mankind. Exposed for sale at New York, he was auctioned off to a Connecticut merchant, and began his New World career as an indentured servant. He was an industrious boy. Soon he was able to redeem his freedom from his master with a pair of bullocks. Thenceforth, caring not a fig who knew of his plebeian origin, Lyon sprinkled his conversation with the oath: "By the two bulls that redamed me!"

At Litchfield, in Connecticut, Irish Mat frolicked with the Tabithas and Jonathans at apple-parings and quilting-bees. He did his share of sparking and bundling, drank respectable quantities of Boston rum, and in his thick brogue loudly jeered King George the Third. His blustering enterprise and boundless self-confidence won the attention of the Litchfield men who became the founding fathers of Vermont, Ethan and Ira Allen, Remember Baker, and Thomas Chittenden. Matthew married a niece of Ethan Allen, the Green Mountain Robin Hood. In 1774 with his wife and children he himself adventured to the wilds of western Vermont.

Reveling in the profuse lustiness of this Yankee frontier, Lyon as one of Allen's Green Mountain Boys stoutly resisted all attempts of New York to enforce its title to the Vermont lands. In the eyes of New York's royal governor, he was an outlaw, a member of the Green Mountain banditti that assaulted officials from Albany, mobbed

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Yorkers at pleasure, and defied colonial courts and royal decrees. With the Revolution Matthew became, overnight, a respectable Minute Man. He was with Ethan Allen at the capture of Ticonderoga. He persuaded many of the Royal Irish to desert, and to take up arms in Freedom's Cause. At Crown Point he captured a British sloop-of-war, ingeniously mounting two heavy pieces of ordnance and, as he proudly remarked, putting "the match to the first cannon ever fired under the auspices of the American Eagle."

Of all his Revolutionary exploits the one that later most interested his political foes was the Retreat from Jericho on the Onion. In 1776 a militia company of which he was second lieutenant was sent by General Horatio Gates to Jericho, in northern Vermont. This was an exposed position, directly in front of Burgoyne's invading army. The men became mutinous. They accused Gates of being hand-in-glove with speculators whose property on the Onion river was endangered, made a fuss about Indian raids in the neighborhood, and protested that if the British grand army should pop out of the woods they had but one small canoe to transport the company across the raging Onion. Lieutenant Lyon exhorted them to stand their ground and die, if need be, like a Spartan band. But Jericho on the Onion was not another Thermopylae. The citizen-soldiers scurried to safety, and Lyon, with his fellow officers, was cashiered from the army. Thereafter his enemies embellished the incident, and declared that he had been drummed out of camp to the Rogue's March, wearing a wooden sword as a badge of his cowardice.

Lyon roared in pain and anger whenever that slanderous wooden sword was mentioned. It was grossly unfair. On his leonine brow were laurels won as a Minute Man

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at Ticonderoga, as a Green Mountain Ranger under Stark at Bennington, and as a paymaster who fought with fuzee and bayonet at Saratoga. The same officers who court-martialed him in 1776 procured for him in 1777, for his heroic services, a captain's commission in the Continental army. In 1780 his militia regiment, men and officers, had elected popular Mat Lyon as their colonel.

No sunshine patriot was the stocky, red-faced Irishman in the times that tried men's souls. He was one of the most aggressive and radical members of the Council of Safety that kept Vermont a fighting unit when Burgoyne's invading Hessians, Britons, and Indians ravaged the land. He was active in the confiscation of Tory estates, which incidentally allowed good Whigs (including himself) to recoup patriotic losses. Often did he smite the council table and swear — "By the two bulls that redamed me!" — that the war must be fought to the very death, until the Green Mountain Republic was made free and independent.

When the smoke of battle lifted, Colonel Lyon stood forth prominent and prosperous. He had taken to himself as his second wife the daughter of his friend and colleague, Governor Thomas Chittenden. He had founded the town of Fairhaven ("Lyon's Works"), and was there the proprietor of a casting furnace, nail factory, grist mill, saw mill, paper mill, and a printing press. From one enterprise alone he made a tidy fortune: the conversion of the old cannon at Fort Ticonderoga into implements of peace. In addition to these substantial achievements his energy and gusto in politics were putting him well on the road to national honors, and national abuse. Already had his views and methods provoked doggerel which contained some truth and a little prophecy —

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I sing the idol of a party,
A factious demagogue as hearty,
As ever hung, or lost his head,
Since merry days of Johnny Cade.

Though Justice frown or Discord smile,
I will be heard above a mile,
To laud a man who cannot fail
To go to Congress — or to jail!

A hereditary rebel, he heartily agreed with Thomas Jefferson that the Federalists, the followers of Washington, Adams, and Hamilton, were "Anglican, monarchical, & aristocratical . . . timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty." He became one of Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans, a friend of Revolutionary France, a foe of all who would make America an aristocratic republic. Putting his heart and soul into the fight to safeguard "the principles of '76," he gave freely of his energy and wisdom. He established at Fairhaven a partisan newspaper, and invested no less than three thousand dollars in militant Republican propaganda.

Plunging into Jefferson's tempestuous sea, the Colonel-Editor combatted the "pernicious Tory doctrines" of America's self-styled "rich, wise, and well-born," whacked away at George the Third and his "bloody sea-robbers," poured vitriolic abuse on Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, and all enemies of the Rights of Man, acclaimed the Jeffersonian minority in the Congress at Philadelphia, and sang loudly and persistently the praises of a certain true-blue democrat, namely Matthew Lyon.

His passing merit will I shout
Through every village round about;
With fife, drum, ram's horn, conch-shell, trumpet,

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I blow, squeak, whistle, roar, and thump it,
Till all shall think the devil's to pay,
From Bennington to Canada!

With characteristic aplomb, Lyon claimed major credit for the eventual triumph of "Jefferson and Liberty." In truth, he made a great stir among the Green Mountain Boys, whom the Federalists disdained as "a herd of loose persons," vulgar and pert backwoodsmen. He struck terror among the conservatives by the converts he made to democratic principles, "those brutalizing tenets of infidel French Mobocracy." Godly Puritans attributed to him much of the "Jacobinic phrenzy" which caused Vermont farmers to erect liberty poles in honor of filthy French *sans culottes*, to read Tom Paine, and to huzza rabble-rousing Tom Jefferson. Measured in terms of their abuse the Colonel's fame was considerable.

Federalists pictured him as "the scum, the scandal of the age, a blot on human nature's page," a demagogue who exemplified the saying that of all Jefferson's imported mobsters those from the peat bogs of Ireland were "the most God-provoking Democrats this side of Hell." On the hustings, they said, he distributed free grog among his "restless, swearing crew, whom sense ne'er guided, virtue never knew," and urged on to deeds of violence against his opponents "those fomentors of evil works, Matthew Lyon's cubs." If elected, he promised to transform country bumpkins one and all into squires, sheriffs, or justices of the peace. With his famous five-pail kettles made from "the democratick metal" of Ticonderoga cannon he pensioned "half Vermont's vulgarity" —

A kettle was a pretty present,
For any mountaineer or peasant,
Who would procure him votes in plenty —
Each kettle paid, I think, for twenty!

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The energetic Colonel was sent to the Vermont Assembly in 1777 and, as he boasted, "was afterwards 18 times re-elected." He was, however, forced to wage a long, uphill fight before he was elevated to the federal House of Representatives. Six times was he defeated, but each time he "rose like Antaeus from mother earth, strengthened for another trial." Supported by a loyal band, practiced in political intrigue, possessing calloused sensibilities and an indomitable spirit, Lyon pressed forward and at length won the coveted seat in Congress Hall.

Promptly upon his arrival at Philadelphia in May of 1797 the Colonel leaped into national notoriety by denouncing the courtly custom then followed by Congress of replying, *en masse*, to the President's opening message. This was unrepublican British mummery, said Democratic Mat. It was time and dollar wasting, "a boyish piece of business." He for one would not join the House in parading through the streets to the palace of John Adams in order to shake hands with His Serene Highness and flatter him with an obsequious Reply to the Throne.

> We Lions bold abominate
> To court the great and wealthy,
> I did it not in Vermont State,
> I sha'n't in Philadelphia.
>
> Nor was I to Congress sent
> To dress like coxcomb fine, sir,
> To cringe before the President,
> And taste his cake and wine, sir.

When fastidious New England Federalists sneered that there were enough gentlemen of "American blood and accent" to carry the reply to President Adams, Matthew

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retorted with a scathing arraignment of Yankee insolence and cant. He was proud of his Irish blood and American patriotism; proud, indeed, that he was not descended from "the bastards of Oliver Cromwell, or his courtiers, or from the Puritans who punish their horses for breaking the Sabbath, or from those who persecuted the Quakers and burned the witches."

This, his maiden speech in Congress, drew the fire of the Federalist press. Opening his batteries of scurrility upon the truculent democrat, William Cobbett of *Porcupine's Gazette* announced the arrival in Philadelphia of a most extraordinary animal, "The Lyon of Vermont." Caught on the bogs of Hibernia, transported when a whelp to America and swapped by his master for a pair of bulls, the beast, said Editor Cobbett, had been domesticated by a daughter of Governor Chittenden, who "would stroke him and play with him as a monkey. He differs considerably from the African lion, is much more clamorous and less magnanimous . . ." In contrast, the Republican press acclaimed the Colonel as the champion of America's enlightened yeomanry, a plain-bred mountaineer who in the very sanctum of aristocracy had defied the pomp and pageantry of King John Adams and his minions.

> No custom sway'd him, and no frowns impress'd,
> But truth and virtue fir'd his manly breast.

The high point of Lyon's congressional career was his famous "retort courteous" to Roger Griswold of Connecticut on January 30, 1798. In the House that day the members were talking, laughing, munching apples, or writing letters home, when Griswold overheard the Colonel boast that he could go into Connecticut with a Republican newspaper and within six months turn out

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its time-serving Federalist politicians. "If you went into Connecticut," sneered young Griswold, "would you wear your wooden sword?" There were shouts of derisive laughter at the Hero of Jericho. But the Colonel pretended not to hear. Plucking him by the sleeve, Griswold deliberately repeated the insult. Thereupon Lyon turned and spit full into Griswold's face.

Before the gentleman from Connecticut could get out his handkerchief, the Federalist majority were demanding the expulsion of "the Vermont Beast," whose manners were those of the boozing ken and brothel. Their intemperately righteous denunciation, sustained for two uproarious weeks, was scarcely less vulgar than "Spitting Mat's stream of mundungus." But Lyon did not make matters better by giving notice to all the world that he was not a man whom anybody could kick in the backside (he used a coarser word) with impunity. For the Federalists seized upon this "outrageous, gross, and indecent" word, "meaning the posteriors or hinder parts of the said Lyon," as a new affront to the dignity of the House. Nevertheless, when the vote was taken on February 12 they were unable to command the two-thirds necessary for his expulsion. By the saving grace of the Republican minority, "The Man of Spittle, unpunished and uncensured," retained his seat.

Three days later Griswold, now dubbed "The Sweetly Bathed Hero," made a cowardly attack upon the unexpelled Lyon. Just after the chaplain had concluded a prayer for peace between America and France, "Sir Yankee" sneaked up behind "Sir Paddy" as he sat at his desk, and with a stout yellow hickory club rained blow after blow upon "his unarmed foe's defenceless brain." Extricating himself as quickly as possible, the Colonel rushed to the fireplace, "seized the tongs, to ease his

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wrongs, and Griswold thus engaged." The fire-tongs struck from his grasp, he ran behind the Speaker's chair and there, after being cudgelled full in the face, managed to clinch with Griswold and pull him to the floor. Over and over they rolled, kicking, scratching, yelling, until other members yanked them apart by the legs. Some semblance of order was restored, but when they renewed their scuffling the House adjourned for the day. Chortling with delight that "Connecticut Roger" had cudgelled, bruised, and bled "Hibernian Mat," the Federalists — those self-styled Friends of Order — refused to entertain a motion for Griswold's expulsion.

Hogarthian caricatures and Rabelaisian ballads spread nationwide the fame of this "Congressional Display of Spit and Cudgel," this modern "Spunkiad." In the "House of Wisdom" at Philadelphia "The Knight of the Dagger of Lath" and "The Knight of the Rheumful Countenance" were reviving the age of chivalry, entertaining "Their Majesties, The People, with Spectacles, Shews, and Exhibitions." The press discussed technicalities of the bout. Did Lyon spit natural saliva or tobacco juice? Was he wearing his hat when "Griswold's stick of vigour full, knock'd *gently* on his solid skull?" Was not his four-letter word for buttocks fully sanctioned by Shakespeare and Pope, and by Doctor Sam Johnson's folio dictionary?

Serious-minded citizens lamented that the American Congress, only recently termed by Abbé de Mably "the grand Amphyctionic Council of the New World," should be debased into a boxing-school or bear-garden. What will Europe think of America? they asked. This spit and rib-roasting affair "cannot cost less to the Union than ten to twenty thousand dollars worth of time; besides a loss of character and dignity *above the price of Rubies*."

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At this same session, one of the most spirited in congressional history, the Federalists thrust the nation into a quasi-war with Republican France, and attempted to annihilate political opposition by enacting the despotic Alien and Sedition laws. Lyon was certain that the Sedition act was expressly aimed at him. He did, in fact, become the first notable victim of the Federalist "Reign of Terror."

On his way home from Congress he met with jeers and hoots, had the Rogue's March played under his tavern window, and was hustled out of Jersey towns by mobs that reviled him as a Jacobinic wild Irishman, an unpatriotic Gallicized Jeffersonian. The Terror was on. Made overbold by the war hysteria, the Federalists in Vermont and elsewhere attempted to imprison "seditious" Republican editors and to sweep all offices clean of "Jacobinic disorganizers." Lyon, who was marked for slaughter, displayed a reckless courage. He openly flaunted his defiance in his newspaper, which he now called *The Scourge of Aristocracy and Repository of Important Political Truths.*

Right gallantly did the Colonel-Editor crusade for freedom of speech and the press. With heavy editorial bludgeon he vigorously assailed John Adams and all "low, dirty, deceitful" Tories, who attempted "to prepare the American mind for a state of abject slavery," and to form an alliance against the French Republic with the "corrupt and tottering" British Monarchy.

But it was not *The Scourge of Aristocracy* that caused Lyon's arrest, his farcical trial before a bigoted (and cigar-smoking) Federalist judge, and his sentence to four months in jail and a fine of one thousand dollars. It was a letter written at Philadelphia three weeks before the passage of the Sedition act, in which he charged Presi-

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dent Adams with "a continual grasp for power, an unbounded thirst for ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation, and selfish avarice." For this he was seized, convicted of being "a notorious and seditious person," and thrown into a foul-smelling, unheated Federal bastille where he was brutally set upon by "understrappers of despotism."

Lyon's martyrdom became a *cause célèbre*. Republicans throughout the nation demanded his immediate pardon. Green Mountain Boys, "those sons of clamor and sedition," threatened to tear down his jail. Upon the Colonel's advice, however, they expressed their wrath at Federalist tyranny by marching to the polls. The "convict" was overwhelmingly re-elected. When the enraged "aristocratic puppies" tried to hold him in jail for failure to pay his fine, Matthew put up his property as lottery prizes. Vermonters gave him a thousand dollars in silver, and Republicans in Virginia and elsewhere contributed another thousand in gold.

On the day of deliverance, with money in his pocket, out of jail rushed the Colonel, shouting "I'm on my way to Philadelph-i-a!" A roar went up from the crowd of democrats. After three hearty cheers for "The Victory of Liberty" and prolonged huzzas for "Our Brave Representative," the people "old and young, man and maid, marched round the town in grand parade." They cheered and toasted him anew, placed him in a sleigh, and sped him on to Congress Hall to the tune of Yankee Doodle.

Once again, jeered the Federalists, "a Lyon of Hibernian breed, in Congress reared his shaggy head . . . the brogue still hobbling on his tongue, his brows with rank rebellion hung." But the day of Federalism was about ended. Popular reaction to the Alien and Sedition act, and to the martyrdom of Lyon, had given a mighty impetus to the campaign to elect Jefferson.

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Democratic Mat openly gloated over the downfall of "Adams and Aristocracy." At precisely one minute after the close of the President's term of office, Lyon wrote "Citizen Adams" a long valedictory upon his four years as chief "of a party the most base, cruel, assuming and faithless that ever disgraced the councils of any nation." No longer will you strut and swell in anticipation of an American crown, but rather than "coil round yourself like the rattlesnake, and bite yourself," advised Lyon, "betake yourself to fasting and prayer for awhile" and let your fate be a warning to any future American usurper and tyrant.

Having dispatched President Adams he looked with a proprietary eye upon his successor. For had it not been for Honest Mat Lyon, he would declare, the House of Representatives in 1801 might have made Aaron Burr President and Thomas Jefferson Vice President. During that long tie-vote contest, ending only with the thirty-sixth ballot, "a Lyon grim and bold, for desperate warfare fam'd of old," manfully resisted Federalist bribes and cast Vermont's vote for Jefferson. In telling the story the Colonel would swear — "By the two bulls that redamed me!" — that the seductive offers were as high as thirty thousand dollars. This, and other heroic sacrifices, gave him a paternal interest in Jefferson's administration. When piqued, perhaps at his failure to land a government contract, Lyon would roar at all and sundry: "I made Tom Jefferson, and I can unmake him!"

> Behold! along yon western plains,
> Where wild Misrule with Mischief reigns,
> Behold that dark Intriguer steer
> A devious course through Faction's sphere.

Thus did the Federalist wits report the Colonel's emigration to western America, in 1800, as the path-

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finder, commander, and financier of a group of Vermont Republican families whom he had induced to leave an East contaminated by Federalist aristocracy. Whatever his motives in quitting Vermont (there was some scandal about the lottery of his property), he was eminently successful in conquering the canebrake wilderness of the Dark and Bloody Ground. Here, in the free and open West, his creative energies as an empire-builder had full scope. Anchoring his emigrant flotilla off the Great Eddy of the Cumberland river, he disembarked his Yankee pioneers, fired them with his Celtic enthusiasm, sustained them with his resolute courage, and soon had "the wild woods of Kentucky" humming with an unwonted industry. In no time at all he was the squire of the flourishing town of Eddyville, and was making money hand over fist as a planter, merchant, editor, manufacturer, and shipbuilder.

In Jacobinic Kentucky his reputation as "The Scourge of Aristocracy" was warmly appreciated. While the Republican gentry of the Blue Grass region about Lexington found him personally obnoxious, the coonskin democrats of southwestern Kentucky idolized the Colonel. In 1802 they sent him to the Legislature. In the following year they sent him to Congress, at Washington, and kept him there until 1811.

Truly impressive were his victories in a frontier country notorious for its tumultuous politics. In all Kentucky there was no candidate so energetic, so colorful. Lyon's bag of electioneering tricks, said seasoned observers, was inexhaustible. He could out-shout his rivals, "drink Grog all day long without getting drunk, & tell pretty good rough anecdotes." He kept influential men informed of his political importance, printed and distributed free almanacs and pamphlets, gave money to widows and

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orphans, and "roared like a Lion on the stump." From Washington he bombarded his constitutents with self-laudatory newsletters. If a man complained of not receiving one, Lyon would swear that he had franked a copy, shouting "*Damn that post-office!*" When Josiah Quincy asked how he had won his seat from Kentucky so soon after his arrival, the Colonel with terse frankness replied: "By establishing myself at a cross-roads by which everybody in my district passed from time to time, and abusing the sitting member."

His first victory, according to one who voted for him, was over Major Walker, "an accomplished Virginia gentleman," whom "Old Lyon generally got . . . drunk before dinner time, & in that way triumphed over him." Before debating their respective merits in the different hamlets, the Colonel would engage the Major in a bout, drink him down, put him to bed in the tavern, and then explain to the sovereign people, all the while attending his rival with ostentatious solicitude, that "Major Walker is an excellent man, but unfortunately he sometimes drinks too much." Such kindness! Such drinking capacity! It won Lyon many votes. His appetite also helped. During the same campaign a friend who had him to dinner complained that "*he eat up all the strawberries,*" thus depriving the family of their dessert, "to the infinite distress of the child," who "screamed lustily . . . but without disturbing the equanimity of our ill-mannered guest." The story of the Colonel and the berries delighted "the plain, honest, rough men of the County. . . . They swore by their Maker, that 'Matthew Lyon was their man!'"

Campaigning in Kentucky, however, was not all strawberries and cream. On the hustings in 1806 when a rival alluded to the Battle of Jericho and the Colonel's wooden

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sword there ensued what the New York *Herald* called a lively scuffle. "Mr. Lyon immediately cracked away at Mr. Cofield, but Mr. C so completely defended himself that he parried off the blow, and the scene of action commenced hot and hard. Mr. C at last knocked the honourable gentleman down, and made an essay to gouge his eye out — in the attempt, however, the honourable gentleman got Mr. C's thumb in his mouth and completely amputated it at the first joint."

In Congress Lyon left but little fleece on the legislative hedges other than "retorts courteous." Having settled in 1801 (so he claimed) "the mighty stir twixt Jefferson and Colonel Burr," he was privileged while a member of the House to hold many lucrative government contracts for army and navy supplies, the carrying of mails, and the building of gunboats. These exposed him to frequent censure, even from such Republicans as John Randolph of Roanoke and Editor Duane of the Philadelphia *Aurora*. But Honest Mat could always hold his own.

Randolph, who had called him "a damned old rascal," he promptly branded a braying jackass, a fulminating madman, an aristocratic Virginia slave-driver. "Out of respect to this House," said Lyon, "I will yet occasionally call him gentleman," but "I thank my Creator that he gave me the face of a man, not that of an ape or monkey, and that he gave me the heart of a man also." Duane, an equally formidable antagonist, he described as "a wretch hunted for his crimes from Asia to Africa, from Africa to Europe, from Europe to America," whom he had "enabled to put on a clean shirt, to fill his belly, to look a little sleek, and hold up his head" — only to have him become "a skunk, bemired with filth, and shunned as a spectre." All this was only a mild warning. For the Colonel said he regarded himself, on the present occa-

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sion, as merely "a provoked mentor," and assured Duane that "still your old friend is not your enemy."

This intra-Republican strife delighted the Federalists. Lyon's sketches of his fellow Republicans, and of himself, not only revealed "the snarling elves, at loggerheads among themselves," but conclusively proved, they said, the corruption and anarchy of Jeffersonian Democracy. The Colonel-Editor had shown how "the tail of the body politick in America has got the upper hand," and "cannot fail to amuse all those who can contemplate the *backside* of human nature with complacency."

More worthy of comment, however, was the ironic twist of fate by which Democratic Mat, in his later career, found himself in rapprochement with his old enemies. The Federalists were disconcerted, not amused, when the former Scourge of Aristocracy became their political ally. He was an embarrassing bedfellow for the men who had long belabored "Spitting Mat, the Democrat." Yet he was not consciously attempting to prove, as Henry Adams said, that paradox is the first principle of politics.

With the mercantile Federalists, Lyon, himself a merchant and shipbuilder, opposed the Jeffersonian policy of protecting America's neutral trade by embargoes and economic sanctions. He denounced it as self-ruinous, scolding paper warfare. And when his constituents in 1810 failed to re-elect him, considering his alignment with Federalism a mortal lapse from "correct principles," the Colonel's faith in democracy and majority rule began to waver. He even lamented that "the Democratic spirit has carried this Nation far on toward ruin." Strange words for the Martyr of '98!

In allying himself with the pro-British Federalists against the War of 1812, the Irish-American who so often

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had vilified George the Third and his "bloody sea-robbers" showed an unusual courage and independence. For Kentucky of all the states most passionately supported this "Revolution No. 2." While he could but agree with young Henry Clay, the spokesman of a bellicose New West, that the war was just, Lyon contended that it was grossly inexpedient. He scorned Clay's war-hawk Young Americans as "bullying politicians . . . gasconading would-be conquerors of Canada." Yet he emphatically refused to embrace the disunionist sentiments rife at this critical period among Yankee Federalists. "I will not despair of this Nation," he declared; this nation "at the foundation of which I have labored with as much zeal as a devotee ever labored for Heaven or his God."

Cast aside in his declining years by the nationalistic democrats of Kentucky, and stripped of his property by Jefferson's Embargo and by wartime speculations, the Colonel with a smile and an oath — "By the two bulls that redamed me!" — defied adversity. It held no terrors, he said, for a man who had been Dame Fortune's football all his life. Having left his mark on Connecticut, Vermont, and Kentucky, it was not surprising that he again felt the pull of those forces which gave America a high mobility, and caused her restless sons ever to be moving on to fresh frontiers. In 1820 for the last time Mat Lyon pioneered westward.

At the age of seventy, with the same indomitable spirit he had ever displayed, whether as indentured servant or squire, politician or merchant-manufacturer, the old Colonel migrated to Arkansas Territory. There he became Indian agent to the Cherokee Nation, endured the hardships of a fur trader's life, and even succeeded in having himself elected a territorial delegate to Congress.

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But in 1822, just as he completed a hazardous three-thousand-mile river journey, and was ambitiously planning to build the largest cotton-gin in the frontier Southwest, death overtook the sturdy old pioneer. Vanquished by the inevitable victor over both aristocrat and democrat, Colonel Matthew Lyon went down with colors flying.

> His dauntless soul despis'd the tyrant's nod,
> And crouched beneath no vile despotic rod.

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Poems for Peace

DAMOCLES

GERARD PREVIN MEYER

Damocles, with shaken knees,
sitting on your throne:
we, who decorate another frieze,
find you not alone.

They who live under a sword
will some day die upon it;
Damocles, pile high the festive board,
for you have won it.

They who live by the sword
will some day take it up —
(Do I hear the fraying of that cord
as I sit and sup?)

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CONQUERORS

TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE

Who are these that thirst for power, and what are they
that cry aloud above the multitude?
The great, brute heel of Time they have not heard. The
long shadows of the afternoon beneath their feet,
The northward shrug of Earth, Earth's southward dip
have not sufficed them for their seasons.
They have parceled Time like the wrappers of bundles,
and fitted their deeds into subtle niches.

With the stallions of war they scent the smoke of cannon
from afar, and the rich legacy of wounds is their
delight.
To the sleeping, eyeless faces of the dead they have
given their hearts, forgetting the spoiling flesh
that is heritage of the vulture and the rat.
Their song is the mockery of thunder, their music the
stuttering wireless, the shoreless waves of the air.
Who will define the meaning of this word called *peace?*
Shall one be found with peace within himself to
tell it down dark corridors of Time?
For they have learned kindness of the angry sea, and
mercy of the winnowing gale.

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Yet as the wind-driven dust will the Earth reclaim
them, the empires fallen, and dark silence locking
the futile lips.

Then shall the dove return to the linden, and the doe
graze with her fawns in the public square.

For what is Man if he measure himself with the hills,
and what is his stature if he stand against moun-
tains?

Time that he thought to dice remains unscarred: drowsy
with bees and clover the perfumed summers wane

To immense, odorless cold. Earth and the seven seas
remain

Guarding the immemorial secret. But what is he that
reared his pyramid on blazing sand,

And where are those who carved a name on crumbling
stone?

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DOOMED BATTALION

AUDREY WURDEMANN

This is a day of rattling rain;
The gusts blow sharp, and drop again;
Not spiteful sleet nor hurricane
Can best the juggernauts of rain.

The rain! the rain! and men are walking,
Gun-weighted, sodden; men are talking —
Somewhere the enemy is stalking;
Somewhere other men are walking.

Men go down when they are shot,
Crawling or quiet; like as not
They lie in puddles till they rot.
Over their bodies men are shot.

Peace holds this city fast tonight.
Along the street long loops of light
Go red and green, go dim and bright,
And people live and laugh tonight.

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The buildings steam; the streets are smoking;
Tangled traffic; people joking;
Faces glow with the rain's stroking —
Somewhere heavy guns are smoking.

Rain over us, rain over them:
Here street lamps blossom, stem by stem. . . .
Madrid, Shanghai, Jerusalem —
And shall we not be warned by them?

Rain and men, men and rain —
The gusts blow stiff, and stop again;
Ache and cold, blood and pain —
Men die hard under the rain.

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BENTONVILLE

JAMES GILMER WHARTON

No hermitage of honor here with folded flag
No smooth-turfed slopes of heroes' sod,
But adversity with broken fence and fields of last year's
corn
Has signed its name in solitude.
Fame was over-spent and forgot its trimmings —
"Under this stone," reads the weed-littered shaft,
"Lie the bodies of three hundred sixty unknown dead."

Hampton rode here, swift, heavy as a bear,
His beard grown long since Averysboro;
Behind him the Carolinians, nostalgic,
Their horses whinnying in the evening air,
Bridles taut and heads held away from home.

Georgians were here, too,
Disconsolate in the rain,
Waiting at the edge of the cypress swamp,
Wet, empty-bellied, sick for peace —
Christ, they said, where are the wagon-trains?

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And there were those from Alabama,
Texas and Tennessee;
They wanted to go home;
They lay quietly by the creek at the bottom of the old plank road
And wondered if Johnston knew what he was doing.

Someone said Richmond was gone,
Someone said Lee had left Virginia,
But there wasn't time to worry;
There was a regiment from Illinois in the broomsedge by the pines —
God, didn't they ever get tired?

When it was over everyone forgot it;
They talked of Chancellorsville,
Fair Oaks, Chickamauga,
And the night, lit with fire, when they left Atlanta;
But they had no tongue for Bentonville.

Now when none remembers, now when history struts handsome over the clean-swept stones of Gettysburg, not interested in lesser affairs posthumously lost,

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Let us pause here amid the half-picked cotton and ask
ourselves, dismayed,
If reconciliation is as easy as the movies manage it,
If Sherman were careless with fate as well as fire,
(His camp-followers encompass the earth!)
If Christ were perhaps in error,
For he that loseth his life gains nothing, notwithstanding
the banks in Charlotte, the bag factories in
Birmingham.

Yes, let us be hard, shut-eyed, impervious to Union,
Capital Resources, Vacuum Cleaners;
Let us forget nothing (We who have time to remember)
Nor escape the oblivious, resplendent, unintellectual
regard for defeat.
Shut the doors on the pompous and the proud
Erase the monumental lines from the merely dead,
And forgive the feckless sighs of a few tender ladies —
They have their reward:
Their tears have not the salt of our quiet eyes.

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VALOR

LOUISE BURTON LAIDLAW

O you who live in danger, rise, allay
The forces of destruction and decay!
Fearful and blind, irresolute you stand
Like a smug ostrich in the shifting sand
Waiting for the inevitable day
When war and tyranny must rend their prey,
As if it were dishonor and disgrace
To plan against disaster, or to face
Force with a tempered calm, and cast aside
Ruthless, vindictive pride.

Summon that valor deep within your heart
Of which your wisdom plays the better part,
And with sane courage battle for mankind,
Thrusting incisive darts from a keen mind.
Could you but find the candor now to brave
Intolerance and anger, you would save
Your race from those brute ravages of hate
When valor comes too late.

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Watch China, Abyssinia and Spain
If you would see the ignominious slain.
These are no victims of heroic battle
But mangled carcasses of helpless cattle.
What valor lies in this brute sacrilege,
This wanton carnage of a restive age
Pillaged by leaders with distorted vision
Planning with keen mechanical precision
Sinister raids more tense with horror than
The primitive encounter — man to man —
When the defiant savage chiefs of yore
Clashed with conquistador.

Fierce drama threads our frontier history; —
The swift alarm, the curdling battle cry,
Triumphant braves swarming through barricades,
The plight of children butchered in the raids —
Only small fists and frozen eyes to mock
The flourished tomahawk.

Now closer stalk red-clawed metallic fears,
Unsatiated with remote frontiers;

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They rasp the central nerve of every nation —
Strike at the gibbering heart of civilization,
As rank on rank of howling planes sweep down,
To massacre gaunt folk of every town;
And sacred laws of God and man are rent
To maim a continent.

"This conflict will not crush," so you say,
"Has not each generation found a way
To nullify the grim potential gore
Of its ingenious mastodons of war?"
Not crush! But when grim peoples sicken tense
With agonized, incredible suspense,
No opiate can calm the mad despair,
As war swoops everywhere.

What will you do, you gallant women, toiling
Amid relentless carnage and despoiling?
How will you drive the dynamos or reap
Depleted scraps of nourishment to keep
The gasping body of your nation fed,
While the relentless sabotage of dread

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Eats through the inmost fibre of your core?
What will you do when droning demons soar
On saber wings, ripping high clouds to cast
A pall of choking poison or a blast
Of steel and flame to pierce your dwelling through;
What will be left of valor then for you?
Impotent wretch, with nothing left but hate
To hurl back at the callous wings of fate —
You clench your fists at the encumbered sky
And watch your children die.

And what of you, brave men, sunk in the stenches,
The drab monotony, the filth of trenches;
Or you who search astutely, but in vain
To spare your cities from the vengeful plane;
Or you in terrifying squadrons sent
To bomb the innocent?

You fighting men, yes, there may be some few
Distorted strains of valor left in you.
With spirit, half divine and half insane,
Flaunting the symbols which your lords ordain

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You wield the spear of ordered tyranny,
Or the keen sword of justice for the free —
Still confident your imprecations hurled
Can cleanse a blighted world.

But should you pause, turn weary eyes and find
That ravage and destruction stalk behind,
More terrible than strife, what battle song
Could spur your valor, what repair your wrong?
Will you fight on for symbol or for state
When all your hearth and home lie desolate;
Your children slain, your wife distraught and maimed;
The soul of beauty crushed, and wisdom shamed?
What would be left for you, insensate men,
That's worth the fighting then?

O you who live in danger, rise, allay
The forces of destruction and decay.
Summon that valor deep within your heart
Of which your wisdom plays the better part.
When the world suffocates in flames of hate, —
Then valor comes too late.

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STRUGGLE END

JOHN PADOVANO

So through the night burned woodfires:
Not silent the men: of color striking:
The bestial showing: the sweat: the blood:
Loud the rancorous breaths:
Others in cool of dust:
The exhaustion:
Yet gripped of fury the brain:
Not much before
The conflict a violent spasm
Hurled at the waiting:
Tumult cracking the earth:
The tearing: hatred rising:
Of man to man to brother to man:
The killing:
Now burning woodfires:
Preparing:
Waiting again:
And lo: beyond. . . .
Beyond destroyed coolness of wood
A dream of conquest in night's purity:
Rawness of corpses: death birds:
Tearing talons: the filth of beaks:
And over all:
The stars:
Their journey. . . .

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Has Wallace Too Much Hay Down?

FELIX BELAIR, JR.

WHEN President Roosevelt was elected in 1933 by the largest majority ever given a candidate for the office, one of the most frequently heard explanations of his success was the large volume of political promises he scattered before him among all classes of the electorate. As the traditional battle ground on which so many Presidential campaigns had been lost or won, the Farm Belt naturally was promised the world with a fence around it. A promise of remembrance for the "forgotten man" might go all right in the big eastern cities but not in the middle west. There, the only promise that would do the trick was the party's pledge to restore farm income to its pre-war level. And the pledge was given.

But getting elected with the aid of farmers who thought the President would keep his word was one thing and making good on the promise was quite another. So President Roosevelt began looking for a man on whom he could depend to carry out the promises. He must be loyal to his chief, know farming from the grass roots up and, above all else, have the confidence of the farmers. That man was George N. Peek. He had made a fortune in farm implements, spent part of it in the unsuccessful fight for a farm relief measure that would subsidize exports, and had convinced farmers that he was "in politics for agriculture and not in agriculture for politics." So George was offered the job of Secretary of Agriculture.

But George had a business of his own to look out for and had no particular liking for the responsibilities that went with the cabinet post that was to head up the agricultural program to which the administration was committed.

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He suggested instead that the job should go to Henry A. Wallace, a young man who had made quite a reputation in Iowa as a corn breeder and country editor, who had taken the stump for Alfred E. Smith in 1928 and whose father, Henry C. Wallace, had been Secretary of Agriculture in the Harding administration.

And so it was that Henry Wallace came out of the west, a tall young man with a lantern jaw and a logical scientific turn of mind, to tackle the job of Secretary of Agriculture and of making good on Presidential campaign speeches he had sometimes inspired. To a Washington used to secretaries of agriculture drawn from the ranks of state extention directors and rural automobile dealers, there had never been a more "countrified" cabinet member than Henry Wallace.

With his hat tilted well back on a head of unruly reddish brown hair, a folksy manner of speech and a general appearance of being constantly attired in his Sunday best, Henry Wallace looked for all the world like the dressed-up country-jake of the eastern schoolboys' imagination. When his faithful colored orderly that served his father before him first decked him out with striped trousers and a morning coat for the swearing in exercises at the White House, Mr. Wallace asked apprehensively whether he was expected to dress that way for every cabinet meeting.

But the folksy way of talking and countrified appearance of Mr. Wallace was his weakest side, even in March 1933, in the artificial atmosphere of the nation's capital. Few sought him out in those bouncing days of the New Deal. Agriculture and farm leaders were still matters to be reckoned with only at election time. After all, Mr. Wallace was a corn-hog farmer from Iowa and virtually without political experience and with little more influence. Suppose he had predicted the post-war and

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recent depressions on the basis of his studies of the economic aftermath of the Napoleonic wars and similar ancient upheavals. None seemed to know about it and cared less.

The new agriculture Secretary had another side that revealed itself whenever a government official or casual visitor showed a tendency to temporize with the economic well-being of farmers or to overlook what he considered basic economic facts. Then he would hit hard and straight from the shoulder with a cold logic that found emphasis in his clear blue eyes.

Because he usually had something to say and never hesitated to say what was on his mind, the Secretary's press conferences were always well attended. He had come to Washington to do a definite job and he considered that speaking his mind on any and all occasions was a part of that job. When a relatively few bakers increased their bread prices by an amount not justified by the new processing tax on wheat, Mr. Wallace did not hesitate to say so. He lashed out at the packers and grain speculators when their activities seemed to interfere with his job of making good on campaign promises. And in most instances he gained his point.

Those were the days when Henry Wallace believed that a frank question demanded a frank answer. When asked one day whether he was a Democrat or a Republican, he said he was a country editor who had read himself out of the Republican party and had not yet qualified as a thoroughgoing Democrat. He had come to Washington, he said, to see to it that the government did right by the farmers and would remain there only so long as it continued right by them. He was a man in whom burned the fires of idealism and what he regarded as social justice.

Being a natural scientist, Mr. Wallace regarded social

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justice as something more than a talking point. It could be weighed, defined and meted out to the individual in proportion to his contribution to society. There was something very wrong with a system that permitted a few people to become fabulously wealthy while contributing little if any more to the welfare of society than those who earned barely enough to keep body and soul together. To illustrate his point to a friend, he once compared men to the daisies in the field. Up to a point, some daisies could be found that were more perfectly formed than the majority of the species but these were so few in number as to be negligible when considering what was best for all the daisies. It seemed to be Wallace's view that a lot of people were getting considerably more than they deserved from society and that a majority was being deprived of minimum comforts as a result. Considerations like these led Mr. Wallace inevitably into conflicts with such groups as the packers and tobacco manufacturers. The latter, he discovered, were making an annual profit amounting to more than was paid to the growers for their entire crop. To his way of thinking such a situation demanded a remedy, cried aloud for a remedy. Eventually he found it. The processors agreed to pay more to the growers for their tobacco. When some packers began to take the amount of the processing tax out of the price paid the farmers and, in some cases a little more, that was likewise corrected.

Always, Wallace hit straight from the shoulder. Frank questions demanded frank answers. He tangled with General Hugh S. Johnson and his NRA because he thought the benefits that measure brought the manufacturers were being taken, in some instances, out of the hides of the farmers. His frank discussion of what was good for the farmers led him eventually into the fields of finance and

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foreign trade, the exclusive bailiwicks of Secretaries Morgenthau and Hull. A White House request that he hew more closely to the agricultural line had the desired effect. At press conferences it was explained that questions involving such subjects should be asked of other cabinet members. But in his public addresses elsewhere and in off-the-record talks, Mr. Wallace has never failed to make himself clear on either subject. Like foreign trade, the farmers had too large a stake in the conduct of government fiscal affairs for the Secretary of Agriculture to remain silent on the subject.

If the unyielding determination of the Wallace of those early administration days appeared to be a holdover from his Scotch-Irish ancestry, that quality was never accompanied by the tendency toward the dogmatic, sometimes associated with it. For a man unschooled in the inescapable delays and disappointments of a democratic legislature, Henry Wallace was patient to a fault. His liberalism was reflected in his personal relations as well as in his thinking. Rarely if ever did he lose confidence in the democratic process. He refused to believe that the industrial East could not see the wisdom of a prosperous Farm Belt and its potential purchasing power.

He liked to say that the collective intelligence of the American farmer was equal if not superior to that of the boards of directors of the leading hundred American corporations. But he never doubted the willingness of business men generally to coöperate with government for the welfare of agriculture once they realized the importance of prosperous farmers. It was Wallace who, in those early enthusiastic days of the New Deal, had to supply the restraining influence when his agrarian lieutenants wanted to harness the processors and commodity exchanges. It was Wallace who patiently went back over the

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same premises again and again to explain agriculture's cause to others in the executive branch when his associates were ready to throw up their hands in despair at the inability of some in the administration to appreciate the wisdom of his philosophy.

To have talked with Henry Wallace in 1933 was an inspiration. Uncluttered with restrictions that five years of political life in Washington impose on any man, his mind fairly scintillated in its ability to analyze the nation's plight. Without becoming in the least dogmatic he delighted his visitors with his ability to penetrate into all of the secondary causes of the farmers' ills, how they should be corrected and prevented from recurring. Genuine and unpolished, in the sophisticated sense, he was probably the most unusual man in government.

A vegetarian, he probably knew more about raising hogs than any man in his department. He would leave a cabinet meeting and go out to the government's experimental farm at Beltsville, Maryland, where he seemed to take delight in tramping through muddy fields in freshly polished shoes. Although a total abstainer from alcohol, he would accept a highball and wince as though eating a green persimmon rather than offend a host who had been too shortsighted to provide grape juice.

In most respects, the man who came to Washington in 1933 to help a national administration make good on its promises to the farmers does not differ from the one who today directs the far-flung agricultural program he helped to frame. Yet to those who have been in fairly constant touch with Mr. Wallace during the past five years noticeable changes have taken place. To them he seems to have lost some of that patience that won him renown as a corn breeder and as a manager of men. He will take a newspaper man to task for a headline he did

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not write. He will question the sincerity of a Senator or Representative who does not agree that new legislation is needed to head off another farming crisis. Lately he has been known to lecture his associates for what might seem an error in judgment and to come around later and apologize for "talking like an old college professor." He is more inclined than formerly to condemn the "fair weather liberals" who denounce social and economic conditions or practices and yet hesitate to embrace the remedy he suggests for their eradication.

The effect of these minor and probably temporary changes in the personality of Henry Wallace has been to raise a question as to their cause in the minds of those who "knew him when." Some think it is because he wants to be President and may be working too hard at it. It is certainly true that some of his associates are working at it a lot harder than he is and are not helping him by their efforts. It is also true that Mr. Wallace is one of the very few men who already have been considered by the party leaders as a possible successor to President Roosevelt. And the Department of Agriculture is not the only place where his presidential chances are being discussed. For a proper appreciation of the factors that might make of him a party asset or liability in 1940 it is necessary to examine the record he has made as Secretary of Agriculture.

Like Mr. Roosevelt, Henry Wallace also looked around for a man in whom the farmers had confidence when he undertook his present job. His choice, too, fell upon George N. Peek and he made him Administrator of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

He might have known that a man with George Peek's convictions and experience would not be content for long to play second fiddle in a new undertaking like the AAA but he appointed him anyway. Henry had a lot of ideas

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for helping farmers that George could not go along with and every time he would spring a new one, George would say: "We've got more hay down now than we can get up before it rains."

Big George, red-faced, likeable and set in his ways, had learned as a young man that there was not much use manufacturing more farm implements than could be sold in a couple of seasons. Neither could he see any sense in launching new programs under the AAA before farmers and the general public had a chance to digest the first ones. Eventually he broke with Wallace on the question of who was going to run the AAA and Henry took over the job of hay-making by himself. George went to the State Department and to rows with another cabinet member, Cordell Hull, and eventually into the Landon camp. He was one of a sizeable group of farm leaders who haven't been heard from since the political blizzard of November 3, 1936.

Meanwhile, Secretary Wallace has been busy and has had more luck with the rain than George anticipated or had hoped for. There are no two economists who can agree on the economic effect of the AAA and other farm programs. Nevertheless, the farmers give Roosevelt and Wallace a good bit of the credit for agriculture's recovery since 1932. They showed their feelings at the polls and their votes not only helped re-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt but they definitely made Wallace a presidential possibility for 1940.

The Secretary of Agriculture differs from most of the agrarian leaders in his ability to look beyond the boundaries of the farm. He realizes that pressure groups — and the farm bloc is one of the strongest — are likely to destroy themselves if they pursue a narrow and insistent policy which is best described by the one word "more."

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Furthermore, Mr. Wallace, second only to Cordell Hull, has been the administration's foremost advocate of a rational trade policy. That means that he is a realist in foreign affairs who knows that a continuation of nationalistic policies, with their accompanying trade restrictions, eventually means war. The Secretary of Agriculture has talked about the Supreme Court in language calculated to bring support from organized labor as well as agriculture. He is constantly engaged in plans intended to make the consumer forget about the slaughter of the six million little pigs. Finally, the budding farm tenancy program may be expected to win the aid of sharecroppers, migratory farm hands and others who get only the tricklings of the production control program. This evidence of concern for those at the bottom of the economic pile also might convince the underprivileged in the cities that Farmer Wallace would, if given the chance, put some butter on their bread too.

At the moment, the Secretary of Agriculture is in as strong a position as any member of the rapidly growing group of would-be heirs to Franklin D. But, to repeat a very familiar line, his strength is also his weakness. The Secretary's conception of an agriculture, stabilized and prosperous, is magnificent as is his conception of how the thing might be brought about. Wallace is a dreamer but he is unusually shrewd and practical in shaping his plans to make these dreams come true. Regardless of their soundness, however, plans require execution and that is where trouble lies ahead for Henry Wallace in the next few years. A lot of hay is down and a few dark clouds are beginning to creep above the horizon as if to emphasize the blue of the sky beyond. Upon his record as an administrator will depend his political future.

The program for agriculture during the next four years

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is, for the present divided into two parts: a program to stabilize farm income at satisfactory levels and a program to bring about a better division of this income among all farmers.

The stabilizing program is simple enough in theory. It would include soil conservation and storage of reserves of food and fiber to guard the consumers against the threat of droughts, like those of 1934 and 1936, which burned up hundreds of millions of bushels of corn and wheat.

The 1934 drought came at a time when the AAA production control drives were going full speed ahead and it frightened the agrarians who had been preaching the evils of huge surpluses. The little pigs had been slain only a few months before and the whisper went around that the Lord had sent the drought as a warning and a punishment for this and all production control. The Secretary, too much of a philosopher to be certain of anything, did a good deal of worrying and between times he envied Joseph, who had the foresight to set up reserves against dry spells. Joseph knew how to talk about the farmers and consumers at the same time. The ever-normal granary idea matured in 1936 after another dry siege which was almost as severe as that two years before.

Soil conservation and the storage of reserves in excess of the normal carry-overs are only part of the stabilization plan. Wallace and his helpers clearly remember the experience of the Federal Farm Board which also tried a stabilization plan whose control feature was an attempt to check declining prices by commodity loans. The Farm Board was soon swollen beyond its capacity. It blew up and prices were deflated at the same time.

The Wallace plan has a safety valve on it, a couple of them in fact. Commodity loans are to be made, as was the

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case with the Farm Board, but when the granary begins to spill over, the flow is to be checked at its source. In other words, Supreme Court or no Supreme Court, direct production control is to be employed. Mr. Wallace has another term for it. He calls it storing fertility in the soil rather than in the bin.

The Soil Conservation plan, which is similar to the AAA conservation plan now in effect, would result in some production control. That is one reason for its use in the rounded program which the Secretary has in mind.

The AAA argues and justifiably so that any sound soil conservation plan involves shifting from soil-depleting crops, crops which exhaust the soil such as wheat, cotton and tobacco, to soil-protecting crops like the legumes and grasses. And the production control features can be strengthened considerably by putting emphasis on the diversion of certain crops. For example, the AAA managed to shift about eleven million acres out of cotton in 1936 under its Soil Conservation plan. The yield per acre averaged one hundred and ninety-seven lint pounds, one of the highest on record, but the diversion of the eleven million acres kept the crop to twelve million, five hundred thousand bales and held the price to an average of twelve cents a pound.

Nevertheless, the Soil Conservation plan will only delay the time when the granaries begin to trickle over at the top. If that is the only safeguard, normal weather for a few years will pile up such surpluses that the Farm Board fiasco will be repeated all over again. Before that time comes, the Secretary is prepared for production control which approximates that type of adjustment that was invalidated by the Supreme Court. Farmers would be paid to reduce their production and no bones would be made about it.

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The plan does not stop there. If the voluntary type of production control does not bring supplies, including granary supplies back to normal, a still more drastic type of control, compulsory control, would be resorted to. In one form or another, a farmer who grew more than his allotment — an allotment fixed by the government — would pay a stiff penalty tax. This kind of control was employed in the Bankhead Cotton Control act and the Kerr Tobacco act. These measures worked. Chester Davis, former AAA administrator, said while he was still at AAA that the Bankhead act might have been an unwanted child but that they had grown to love it just the same. And the returns to tobacco growers during the years of the Kerr Tobacco act were the highest on record, comparatively speaking.

The Bankhead act and the Kerr act were so plainly unconstitutional in the light of the Hoosac Mills decision, the decision which invalidated the production control features of the Agricultural Adjustment act, that Congress repealed them. Now the Secretary proposes to apply their principles to a series of commodities. This is significant, not only with regard to the Secretary's thinking in connection with the Court but also with regard to what will be necessary in operating future farm programs.

The Secretary, it is true, has described the penalty tax phase as a last ditch operation but in view of past experience, it is almost certain to be used.

Congress will continue to authorize money for the present Soil Conservation program and the stabilization program, which the Secretary has in mind, only so long as they keep up farm prices and income without squeezing the consumer too severely. If prices fall sharply or rise sharply over any considerable period, Congress' first reaction will be that of an aroused parent toward a way-

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ward and improvident son. The purse strings will be drawn. But the fact that Congress, sensitive to shifting public opinion, is likely to withdraw or curtail financial support just at the time when it is most needed is only one more cloud that may cause a downpour on Mr. Wallace's hay.

The ever-normal granary program presents an extraordinarily difficult administrative task. The Secretary will turn that job over to the AAA which has well trained and competent personnel seasoned by the programs it has administered since 1932. The AAA was weakened by the loss of Chester Davis, one of the most skilful administrators in government but is well directed nevertheless and is likely to handle the details of the program capably. Whether the program, however sound theoretically, can be operated on a sound basis is another question. The experiences of the Farm Board and even of AAA have led some to believe it cannot be.

A collapse of the ever-normal granary plan within the next four years would be followed in all probability by its revival sooner or later. The idea represents one of the most significant contributions to agrarian thought in years. For that, Henry Wallace must be given full credit. Yet, any breakdown in the plan during the first few experimental years would inevitably be blamed on the Secretary.

The Secretary has pioneered also in another problem field during the past few years: the field of farm tenancy. Originally perhaps, his attention was attracted to this problem by Rexford G. Tugwell, former under-secretary of Agriculture. But he has never dropped the idea.

The existence of a tenancy problem and the need for doing something about it are undeniable. Forty-two percent of all farmers were tenants in 1935 in spite of national land policies intended to bring about widespread

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farm ownership and owner-operation of farms. In addition, many share-croppers and other underprivileged tenants particularly in the South, live under conditions that result in ignorance, disease and shiftlessness.

Thus far, the obvious facts about tenancy have been repeated over and over until their mere repetition is likely to arouse expectations that cannot be fulfilled. Also, there is danger of arousing antagonisms especially in the south, which will hamper the modest beginnings that are possible. The Secretary may find himself unpopular with a lot of tenants and a lot of landlords. The tenants are likely to blame him for failure to make any great change in their condition and the landlords are likely to blame him for the unrest which may occur.

The apparent preoccupation of a section of the Department of Agriculture with the share-croppers in the south has within it the material for another reaction. The middle-west is beginning to murmur that the south will be the chief beneficiary of the millions to be spent on tenancy; the south's conservative farmers are beginning to resent the emphasis upon conditions among their tenants.

These surface indications of resentment might be expected from any program involving such far-reaching implications as does the plan to aid agriculture's stepchildren. The articulate farmer who questions the philosophy underlying the tenancy program is an individualist at heart. He was probably a tenant once himself and may feel that because the farming ladder to ultimate ownership worked in his day it is as good now as it ever was. The figures on the rise of tenancy in the last decade may show that he is mistaken. Nevertheless, his attitude toward the program and the ability of its administrators to alter that attitude may spell the difference between success and

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failure of the undertaking and, incidently, Mr. Wallace's reputation as an administrator.

Being the first venture of the American government into the field of economic and social uplift for agriculture's downtrodden, the path of the tenancy program is literally strewn with pitfalls that are political liabilities for any administrator. Persons opposed to the movement, and they are a goodly number, have already identified Mr. Wallace with some of the rejected provisions of the original farm tenancy bill designed to carry out the recommendations of President Roosevelt's Farm Tenancy Committee. One of the most significant of these proposed that tenants who bought land with government aid should not be allowed to acquire title until after twenty years.

Although plausible enough in theory, the provision was popularly regarded as one of those strictures on individual initiative which have so horrified Herbert Hoover and others during the past few years. Those out of sympathy with the program and opposed to others of Mr. Wallace's ideas were quick to see in the proposal an apparent change in his previously expressed conception of the function of government — to lay down the rules of the game and let others do the playing.

Because this far-reaching program was intrusted to the Resettlement Administration, which had its name changed to Farm Security Administration, predictions of its failure and ultimate collapse have been rife. To most conservatives, resettlement was a symbol of Dr. Tugwell and to many of them Tugwell has been a symbol of radicalism. In consequence many people, including conservatives and liberals, are inclined to prejudge whatever the agency undertakes. Just as in the past, trivial flaws in administration may be magnified

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and the agency subjected to an unceasing round of criticism. When Dr. Tugwell was in charge, this criticism served as a kind of protection, since truths which might hurt more were screened by irresponsible charges.

Resettlement's field was never very clearly defined, not even in the executive order which set it up. It had authority to do and did just about everything that other agencies have done in the farm field. Primarily, however, it concerned itself with the low income farm groups; the South's share-croppers, the West's migratory farm laborers, the drought-stricken families of the West, the underprivileged everywhere.

Perhaps Tugwell had this in mind when he persuaded the President to turn over to him almost four hundred million dollars and some fifteen thousand employes. Certainly, he formed Resettlement with some of the more conservative members of the Department of Agriculture in mind.

Tugwell was in Florida when Secretary Wallace, at the instance of Chester Davis, summarily dismissed Jerome Frank, then AAA general counsel, Gardner Jackson and several others. The men who were fired were all followers of Tugwell. He hurried home, saw Wallace and turned to the White House when he received no satisfaction from the Secretary. Resettlement was the result. The Secretary knew nothing of his undersecretary's intentions until the President was almost ready to sign the executive order.

For months the relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Resettlement was that of estranged relatives. Then the Secretary consented to lift the departmental tent and let Resettlement in but only after Tugwell quit the government to try his hand at making money as an official of the American Molasses company.

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Meanwhile, the old feud, which contributed to Resettlement's organization, goes on. To some extent, it is a quarrel between conservative and liberal. To some extent, it is a row between theorists and practical men, and to quite an extent it is one of those never ending fights for power that goes on in all government departments.

Feeling within the Department has intensified since Resettlement's absorption. Sooner or later, unless some one steps in and knocks bureaucratic heads together, there may be another purge. The Secretary's young and tender presidential possibilities can not stand another such storm. If the liberals lose, the Secretary will be a suspect among laborites and the Tugwell school of agriculture.

If AAA's group of veterans is broken up, organized agriculture, and the southern and middle western landowners, who have all but idolized the Secretary, will turn against him. Already the whisper is going through the South that the Secretary is "playing politics" with an eye to 1940 and that this accounts for his emphasis upon the share-cropper and consumer problems within recent months. That is unfair to the Secretary who is nothing if not sincere. The rumor, however, is not so much malicious gossip as it is bewilderment through failure to understand Mr. Wallace. The Secretary dislikes boresome detail and he is likely to be boyishly enthusiastic over new ideas. These traits have permitted subordinates to enjoy much power. In turn, many men who have contributed heavily to the success of the programs undertaken thus far have felt that the Secretary had lost confidence in them.

The internal friction has contributed to a lack of coordination within the Department. The AAA has run its own show; so has the Soil Conservation Service; and Re-

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settlement apparently is to operate just as independently even though its work overlaps that of the other two. AAA payments, for example, might be conditioned on reasonable requirements for tenant aid. This was proposed to the Tenancy Committee and was incorporated in a tentative draft but was eliminated before the report was approved.

The number of agencies representing the Department of Agriculture in the field is bewildering to the farmers and public generally. They do not differentiate; it is all the government to them and they do not understand the difference in objectives and apparent lack of connection between the procession of Department of Agriculture representatives. The absolute in coöperation and administrative efficiency within the Department will be needed to carry out the Secretary's plans. The programs may not be successful with capable administration; without it they are certain to fail.

The Secretary may have a billion dollar failure on his hands unless he forces his subordinates to work together. Resettlement could lose some of its emotionalism without betraying the share-cropper; certain sections of AAA could admit that there is a tenant problem without affecting the rights of the landowners; and the Soil Conservation Service might confess that the practical value of much of its work remains to be proved.

Yet, the attempts to establish the ever-normal granary on a practical basis might fail entirely without affecting the basic soundness of the idea. The same statement would be true with regard to a tenancy program. Sooner or later, the plans the Secretary has in mind for agriculture are likely to be carried out. His vision, as he has already demonstrated, goes far beyond the field of agriculture.

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The fact that he has not bothered with the details of his farm programs and that he has let his Department get somewhat bloated does not mean that Wallace is not a capable administrator. When he became Secretary, his friends were certain that his shyness and self-consciousness would prevent him from becoming a politician. He not only became a politician but he became a good one. There is little doubt that his first few campaign speeches did more damage to Landon than anyone realized at the time. In his second term as Secretary of Agriculture he may give the country an example of skilful and efficient direction of a gigantic Department which has charge of programs affecting every person in America. If so, he must be reckoned with in 1940.

But he has a lot of hay down!

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"Unity, Coherence, and . . ."

WARREN BECK

ROGER STEVENSON was summing up his lecture. He aspired to a peroration that somehow would fire these thirty college freshmen. But they looked far from inflammable. As they sat staring at him, they seemed not so much resistant to his pronouncements as incredulous of the whole lecture-room situation and ritual.

For a second the sight of them fluttered him and halted him inwardly. He remembered the phrase of a colleague, "those moments in the lecture-room when I feel like a faint, irrelevant dream whispering to restless sleepers who are about to awake." "Exactly," another young instructor had said, "and the class bells their alarm clocks." Yes, thought Roger, as he paused and wiped his lips with his breast pocket handkerchief, this is what they mean, this is the way that it is. *Mais, allons!*

He tucked the handkerchief back into his breast pocket, careful to seem careless and yet to let an edge appear; then he glanced at his wrist watch with a flourish of the forearm not unlike that characteristic of the famous Foster, his favorite professor at graduate school. Unfortunately Roger's gesture brought into the open a frayed shirt cuff, but his pang at its exposure he stifled under the march of goose-stepping words, quick into the breach.

"Unity, coherence, and emphasis! These are your concern not only as students of English composition. These are first principles, unchangeable, the constant criteria of all valid intellectual expression. Although some modern educators decry the formality and abstraction of rhetoric

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inculcated in terms of unity, coherence, and emphasis, these principles remain fixed stars in the thinker's universe. Before thought can carry through effectively to an end, its materials must be circumscribed and sorted out. This is a dual process, inclusion and excision. While seeking completeness, one must at the same time eliminate the extraneous. One's procedure must be drastic and uncompromising. Let me be the first to admit that the search for unity is a difficult one. This, however, I can promise you" — a girl in the first row yawned openly — "first secure unity, and all things else, coherence and emphasis, shall be added unto you."

A little Jew in the second row, usually the most responsive member of the class, blinked in bewilderment.

"By that I mean," his instructor continued hastily, "that when material is unified, when it is made organically one, its parts, according to the laws of logic, will naturally cohere, and will cohere emphatically, in the proper relationship."

Roger paused for a second to smile reassuringly at all the blank faces. In the back row a hulking boy, obviously pampered, the kind one of Roger's regrettably slangy colleagues called milk-fed, rolled his eyes in his lolling head toward the sleek girl beside him and whispered out of the corner of his mouth, "Just so you and me cohere emphatically, baby." While the girl kept her gaze conventionally on the lecturer, a ripple of expression crossed her face, but disappeared at once, and left her classroom mask impassive as a pond at dawn. No one else had heard the whisper, and Roger raised his eyebrows and let them fall into a frown, nervous to quell any irregularity or inattention. Then defensively he sprang to the high plane of his concluding thought.

"May I suggest that those of you who are genuinely

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reflective might be interested in carrying through the line of argument I have indicated to its widest philosophical implications? Considered in their broadest aspects, what are civilization and culture but an attempt to impose upon the chaotic raw materials of existence a scheme that has unity, coherence, and emphasis? And what is human personality in its most significant manifestations but a life that by application of the principle of unity has so clarified and ordered its tendencies that it manifests a wholeness both coherent and effective?"

He had packed the basket with fruit, he thought; now he would lay a leafy branch on top.

"Unity, coherence, and emphasis, by these principles we must all labor. Moreover — ," said Roger, and remembered as always that *moreover* was one of Professor Foster's favorite words, spoken proudly, a symbol of the fine intellectual control especially manifest in his masterly transitions, so that Roger himself could never use *moreover* without mentally tipping a biretta to the glory of Professor Foster, and sometimes thus Roger forgot for an instant where he was in his lecture, and had to say the word twice. "Moreover," he now continued, "above and beyond, as we write compositions, is the possibility of a further achievement — elegance. Not all of us can acquire it, and some of us cannot even aspire to it; but sometimes the fates bestow it, like a victor's wreath, on the one who has mastered unity, coherence, and emphasis."

There was a shifting of feet all over the classroom, and the rustle of gathered notebooks. The whispering boy bent toward the girl, and the back rows heard him hiss, "On your mark — Stevie's signing off." In the face of their impatience Roger risked another sentence that wavered, as before an enemy horde, a slight reed with pretensions of being a magic wand.

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"Yes, elegance is the perfume that sometimes emanates from the perfected flower of thought, come to full growth and bloom according to its kind, unified according to its harmonious principle of being."

The last, careful phrase was obscured by the clang of the class bell just outside his door. He bowed slightly with what was intended to be a dignified sign of dismissal, but it went unnoticed over the heads of the stampeding class.

A querulous nasal female voice thrust itself over his shoulder.

"Mr. Stevenson, what do you mean by this red mark under this word?"

Roger turned, glanced at the line indicated by her scarlet finger nail, and then answered curtly.

"If, having exhausted every resource of hearsay and guesswork, you had stooped to consult a dictionary, you could have learned for yourself that the word common has two m's."

"Okay," she said, without rancor and without interest, and set her jaws to work again on her chewing gum, and strolled out after the rest of the class, with a hopeful eye.

As Roger turned to the desk to gather his notes and papers into his brief case, a beaming face intercepted, ardent, hungry, almost hysterical. A mental card-index fluttered and fell open at Hammersmith, Cora — freshman, and he remembered that her last composition had been about the beauties of clouds.

"Oh, Professor Stevenson, that lecture was such an inspiration!"

"I'm gratified if you found it so," said Roger, politely, yet barricading himself behind a formal tone. Calling instructors professor was one of the crudest devices of that type which student jargon styled the apple-polisher;

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expressing unbounded enthusiasm in indefinite terms was another. But, thought Roger, he had tried to arouse enthusiasm; why should he despise this example of it? Perhaps because Miss Hammersmith was not alone in her votive act. A yard behind her stood Oscar Williams, his formless pimpled face, crowning his slight body as if a sickly stem had brought forth an unhealthily plump fruit, ripening now into a propitiatory grin.

Oscar would want to talk to his instructor. In his nervous whine he would probe the problems raised, expecting Roger to stand by while he stumbled about and got his footing, wanting Roger to stand by a little longer while he fitted the rhetorical principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis into his critique of capitalism, or rejected them because they would not fit. Roger turned more definitely to Miss Hammersmith, hoping in spite of experience that Oscar Williams would not wait.

"Perhaps, Miss Hammersmith, I carried my lecture into an atmosphere which some of your classmates found a bit rarefield. Yes, I am afraid I did. I am all the more pleased to know that someone found it acceptable."

Her eyes widened; her lips parted —

"Oh, Professor Stevenson, that part about having unity in our lives was so wonderful! The way you expressed it was just what I've always thought but could never express. It was wonderful!"

Now the warmth of success began to glow in Roger's blood; he sighed deeply, and his face relaxed into a genuine smile.

"Thank you, Miss Hammersmith," he said earnestly, feeling that no doubt she was sincere, that she was a really appreciative student after all, one of the saving few before whom his words were not wasted.

But I must get along, he thought. I have that shopping

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to do before lunch. I'll break away from Oscar Williams. My lecture was clear enough; he can take it or leave it, I will not postmortem it with him.

Roger turned and picked up his brief case. The gesture was sufficient to dismiss Miss Hammersmith; and leaving a last ladylike smile with him, she waddled out of the room. But Williams stepped up with a light in his eye.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Williams," Roger said, sharply. "I must go at once. I have — er, one or two engagements before lunch. Suppose you come see me one day during my regular office hours."

"Sure," said Oscar, cheerfully.

Roger moved on toward the door; Oscar swooped up his books from a chair and followed closely.

"I'll try to come tomorrow," he said.

"Any time at your convenience," said Roger, over his shoulder, as Oscar trailed him down the hall.

"I was thinking," Oscar began, his voice rising quiveringly into its argumentative whine, "about that matter of emphasis and its application to propaganda."

"Good!" said Roger. "Very interesting indeed. We'll talk about it when you come in. Now I must see Dr. Morgan a minute. Goodbye."

Oscar stopped and sadly watched his instructor disappear into Dr. Morgan's office.

"Goodbye," said Oscar, at last, just as the door snapped shut.

Morgan looked up soberly from the books on his desk.

"Hello, Stevenson," he said, "what can I do for you?"

"Don't let me disturb you," Roger whispered, going to a chair. "I just wanted to sit down and tie my shoe."

"Help yourself."

Morgan turned back to his work. Roger untied and retied both his shoes slowly, allowing plenty of time for

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Oscar Williams to get out of the corridor. Then he rose, waved an easy fraternal salute to the eyes Dr. Morgan raised briefly, and slipped out.

The elation of the successful fugitive grew in Roger as he hurried across the campus, and the distressing image of Oscar Williams faded to make room for more pleasant thoughts. Miss Hammersmith was right; what he had said about the philosophical implications of the principle of unity was not so bad. As he turned into a street of shops, he began to swing his brief case jauntily, in a manner not unlike that of the famous Professor Foster. Roger liked to think of himself as one of Foster's men. But a glance at his reflection in a show window discouraged him; his readymade suit, which he had bought so hopefully at last year's sale, failed to give that tweedy tailored English appearance always radiated by the elegant Professor Foster.

Irritably Roger searched his pockets for the shopping list as he turned into the A. & P. store. Corn flakes, macaroni, 1½ lbs. ground hamburger, bread, pint milk, 2 cans tomatoes (2 for 25¢). That would be a bulky armload to transport through the streets. But the chain stores were cheaper. And they would give him one big paper bag with all the stuff packed into it.

It tired his arm by the time he reached their apartment house, seven blocks further down the street. Hurrying up three flights of stairs with it and his brief case winded him. He delivered his burden cheerfully, though, spilling it over the kitchen table like a horn of plenty.

"There you are," he said to his wife. "I think that's everything you asked for."

He put one arm around her shoulders and kissed her; automatically she raised her face and held back with one hand the short hair that always drifted about her temples.

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"Thanks," she said. "How much was it?"

He showed her the cash register slip; she took a small notebook from the cupboard and wrote down the sum.

"We've run over seventy-five cents on food this week," she said gravely. "I'm afraid we can't have a roast Sunday."

"That's all right with me," he said quickly. "Was there any mail?"

"A letter for me from Aunt Mary. She says we can have the cottage for the summer again next season. And Uncle Frank says you can work a six hour shift at the filling station again if you want to, but he'll have to know in advance."

"Oh, dear," Roger sighed, "I wonder what I should do."

His wife looked at him blankly.

"I suppose I'd better," he finally said. "It will help."

"Yes, it will help."

"I'd like to go back to graduate school for the summer session," Roger murmured, half to himself, "but I don't see how I can."

"No," she said, stopping for a moment with the two cans of tomatoes in her hands and staring out of the kitchen window to the roofs beyond, "I suppose it's out of the question."

Definitely out of the question. Before the depression they had thought they could afford one baby, even if Roger hadn't finished his graduate work. Then the second baby came along. Then a salary cut, and another salary cut. And now there were three children. Somehow — somehow — and yet. . . .

"Where are Roger and Mary Jane?" he asked.

"Somewhere in the building. I think they may have gone down to old Mrs. McMann's apartment."

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Roger frowned.

"You've noticed, I suppose, that Mrs. McMann's grammar is quite faulty."

His wife nodded, and answered,

"I'm afraid she gives the children too much pastry."

Roger's frown returned.

"Well — ," he said.

He drummed on the kitchen table with his fingers; then he cleared his throat.

"How's the baby?" he asked.

"He's been good most of the morning. He cried some about nine o'clock, but he's asleep now," said his wife, as she stored the last of the purchases on the cupboard shelves. Then she turned, with a slight look of animation.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," she said. "Mrs. Campbell phoned. They'd like to have us play bridge with them tonight. I'm to call back this noon."

"The Campbells, eh? You must call back this noon?"

She nodded.

"Well — ," he said. "Would you like to go?"

She hesitated a moment before answering.

"Yes, I would. But it would cost fifty cents for a girl to stay with the children."

Roger frowned again.

"I suppose we need the recreation," he remarked. Then he cleared his throat again, and passed on to a second point. "And it's a good thing to know the Campbells. Campbell is doing very well. They're all saying he'll probably get an assistant professorship next year."

Then suddenly Roger frowned again. For a moment neither spoke and both were motionless. She had stood holding the teakettle, and now quickly she thrust it under the faucet, and the brittle silence confronting them mirror-like was clouded by the rattling spurt of water

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churning hollowly. Clouded but not shattered, for when the clamor of water ceased, the silence loomed again, the bright, cold mirror. The struck match streaked across it; the gas flame exploded into life and took up its sibilant insistent whisper. Roger sighed and moved toward the door slowly. His wife turned from the stove and tossed the hair back from her face with a quick jerk of the head. Looking at him seriously, she spoke with a slight sharpness.

"We'll go then, shall we?"

"Why, yes — that is, if you want to."

"Of course," she said, "certainly I want to go," and she turned away to the cupboard. Then she spoke again without turning her head.

"Lunch in half an hour. Will that suit you?"

"Well — ," he said, frowning, as if upon thirty separate minutes ranged in classroom rows before him.

"Would forty-five minutes be better, then?"

"Well, I must look over some papers. But lunch in thirty minutes will be all right, I suppose. Yes, certainly."

His desk was in their bedroom, shoved up to the window that gave the best light in the apartment. He sat down there and unpacked the compositions from his brief case with a sigh. From his vest pocket he picked out the red-ink fountain pen. He gazed for a minute at the island of green tree tops that marked the park three blocks away; then he dropped his eyes to the first paper, and began to read as if he had thrown a machine into gear. Three lines down the first page he underscored two words with a firm line of red and scribbled *trite.*

Out of the corner of his glancing eye he saw a manuscript in his own handwriting, thrust to one side of the desk. He picked it up, placed it on top of the student's paper, and began to skim through it again. "Scholars and

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Gentlemen. Some Remarks on the Qualities of Eighteenth Century Prose," it was entitled; and unfinished though the essay was, Roger was able to think of it as quite on the genuinely critical side. Now as he reread he saw that beyond doubt his work had unity, coherence, and emphasis; it even seemed to him not without elegance. Although the subject was a bit antiquarian, perhaps that elegance would catch the eye of some magazine editor or other. Then perhaps the published essay would catch the eye of the head of the department, catch the eye of the dean, even of the president. As other essays followed, they would realize that the man who could revive the genteel literary tradition was not negligible. Assistant Professor Roger Stevenson —

Perhaps he could finish the essay tonight. Another page or two, and then a final revision. Yes, he would finish it tonight, type it tomorrow or Sunday, and send it off somewhere, to some editor. Oh, no; he couldn't finish it tonight; they were playing bridge. Alas, the world is too much with us.

But if they were going to Campbell's tonight, he'd best get these compositions marked now. He laid aside his own manuscript and went back to the student's paper he had abandoned. Automatically he marked mistakes in punctuation, grammar, spelling. As he proceeded to page two, he frowned more deeply. Midway through page three he irritably shook the paper into shape and turned it over. On the back he wrote: *This is scattered, disjointed, and pointless as a whole. Know what you are attempting, and then hold to it. Rewrite this paper, and in your revision try to recall and utilize the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis which I expounded in my lecture today* (*Friday*). He paused and read his sentences with approval. Then he signed his initials with a flourish of red ink.

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The Jefferson-Adams Correspondence

EZRA POUND

BETWEEN 1760 and 1826 two civilized men lived and to a considerable extent reigned in America. They did not feel themselves isolated phenomena. They were not by any means shrunk into a clique or dependent on mutual admiration, or on clique estimation. They both wrote an excellent prose which has not, so far as I know, been surpassed in our fatherland, though Henry James had a style of his own, narrative, which was fit for a different purpose.

The correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, following their reconciliation, is a landmark of American culture. It should be for literate Americans both a shrine and a monument. The fact that it is not, that these letters are not part of the regular curricula in American colleges, that the works of both founders are so difficult to obtain, is a damning commentary on American historians and educators. Nothing surpasses the Jefferson-Adams correspondence as evidence of what civilization was in early America. Jefferson and Adams were *civilized* men as well as patriots. Their culture, and that of men like them, was the link between the minds of the old and new worlds; a study of their exchange of ideas illumines both.

For the purpose of this essay I shall define a civilized man as one who can give a serious answer to a serious question — that is *not* understatement — and whose circle of mental reference is not limited to mere acquisition of profit. The degree of his civilization will depend both on the depth of his thought and on the spread of his curiosity. He may have made absolutely no special study

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of anything outside his profession, but his thoughts on that profession will have been such that his thought about anything else will not be completely inane.

In over a century and a half the United States have at no time contained a more civilized "world" than that comprised by the men to whom Adams and Jefferson wrote and from whom they received private correspondence. A history of American literature that omits, as so many do, the letters of the founders, and memoirs or diaries of John Quincy Adams and Martin VanBuren is merely nonsense. Without any special competence in matters pertaining to Benjamin Franklin I should nevertheless hazard the opinion that his public writing will be found slithery and perhaps cheap in comparison. He had no integrity of the word. Or at least there were occasions when it deserted him.

Our national culture can perhaps be better defined from the Jefferson letters than from any other three sources, and mainly to its advantage. I do not think that they have ever been analyzed very clearly in themselves, and I am not sure that anyone has tried very coherently to relate them to anything else. Such a treatment might here seem indicated, but I do not wish, by giving a résumé of the correspondence, to keep anyone who might profit by it from going directly to the letters themselves. Let them serve rather as axes of reference to related ideas, for a yardstick to be applied to other cultural values. Let this essay have no point in the sense that it would *prove* anything about the Jefferson-Adams correspondence. It is rather an attempt to show how it might serve as a point of departure, a workable dynamo, for a revalorization of our cultural heritage. The paragraphs that follow are notes toward such a study. They follow no pattern except possibly that of spokes radiating from the hub of a wheel.

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These are suggested lines of thought, which do not begin to exhaust the rich possibilities of the subject. They begin in the European culture from which that of the founders was drawn.

Let me begin with an anthropologist's dissociation of two systems of thought which have functioned in Europe, without which dissociation one can not "place" the French encyclopedists, who were the immediate intellectual precursors of Jefferson. Without such an approach one can not "come to Jefferson" save as an isolated phenomenon sprung, versatile and voluble, out of chaos, a phenomenon without origins or cause.

A state of mind or intelligence which we will call Mediterranean, a distinct modus of order, "arose" perhaps more out of Sparta than Athens. It developed a system of graduations, an hierarchy of values, among which, above all others, was the concept of *order*. As a mental and intellectual filing system this Mediterranean state of mind certainly did not fall with Romulus Augustulus in 476.

You must not confuse this "state of mind" with, say, the "spirit of the Roman Empire," which Propertius debunked in his scathingly satirical elegies. I have found it helpful and clarifying to adopt the word *paideuma*, a term resurrected from the Greek by the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius to denote "mental formation and inherited habits of thought" as opposed to a statal *weltanschauung*.

The earliest part of the Mediterranean *paideuma* we know hardly more than as from palimpset. We begin to find it solidly in Constantine after 300, and we can trace it on through Justinian. Later we see it in Charlemagne and Gratian. It inheres in St. Ambrose and Duns Scotus. Say that it lasted down to the time of Leo X, and that its clearest formulation was in such a phrase as Dante's

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"*in una parte piu e meno altrove.*" I had better translate this detached phrase by explaining that I take it to mean a *sense of gradations* — thing neither perfect nor utterly wrong, but arranged in a cosmos, an order, stratified, having relations one with another.

The implications of this Dantian concept are extensive. They include about everything that made the Middle Ages great. This sense of relative order is symbolized in the great cathedrals and in the scholastic dialectic. Because to the minds built of this stuff the Word was necessarily holy. I will take that statement out of any possible jargon and translate it for the present emergency: Words, an exact terminology, are an effective means of communication, an efficient modus operandi, *only* when they retain meanings. Such a confusion of terminology as infects the language of ideas today would have been impossible in the *paideuma* that produced Dante.

And this *paideuma*, this Mediterranean order, fell before or coincident with the onslaught of brute disorder and taboo — not what we call the Dark Ages but the darker age of the Teutonic mentality, that grossness of uncult thought which came into European civilization simultaneously with manifestations called "Renaissance" and "Reformation," which in our time have been much muddled and confused by loose talk about Puritanism.

For the moment all I wish to do is to dissociate a graduated concept of, say, good and evil from a gross, unrefined *paideuma*. The former concept was created by a series of men following one another, not neglecting original examination of fact, but on the other hand, not thinking, each one in turn, that the moon and sea were first discovered by himself.

At the time of the Renaissance certain things were "forbidden" specifically on parchment. They were for-

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bidden to Hebrews. The Bible emerged and broke the Church Fathers, who had for centuries quoted the Bible. All sense of fine assay seemed slowly to dim and decline throughout Europe. There were exceptions: men like Lorenzo Valla extended, in one sense, the propaganda for *the right word*, but at the same time the cult of terminology lost its grip on general life.

There can be no doubt that the Renaissance was born of wide-awake curiosity, and that from Italy in the Quattrocento, straight down through Bayle and Voltaire, the *live* men were actuated by a new urge toward veracity.

There can be little doubt, I think, that the Church, as bureaucracy and as vested interest, was the worst enemy of "faith," of "Christianity," of mental order. And yet even that does not tell the whole story. What then is the key? Can we not say that the mental integrity of the encyclopedists dwindled into bare intellect by dropping that *ethical* simplicity which makes the canonists, *any* canonist, so much more "modern," so much more scientific, than any eighteenth century intellectual?

All that I wish to accomplish by these fragmentary analyses is to set up, as a background for Jefferson's thinking, two poles of reference: one, a graduated system in which all actions were relatively good or evil according to almost millimetric measurement, but in the absolute; two, a system in which everything was good or bad without any such graduation, but as taboo, though the system itself was continually modified in action by contingencies.

When this system emerged from low life into high life, when it took over vast stretches of already acquired knowledge, it produced the encyclopedists. Things were so or not so. You had *Candide*, you had writers of maxims, you had "analysis," and you evolved into the *Declaration Of The Rights Of Man*, which attained a fineness so near

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to that of the canonists that no one, so far as I know, has thought much of comparing them.

The Aquinian universe with its grades of divine intelligence and goodness present in graduated degree throughout the universe, gave the thinker a standard for mensuration. What was lost in the succeeding centuries, or what at least went out of the limelight, may have been belief in God, but was certainly in any case the *habit* of thinking of things in general as set in an orderly universe. The laws of material science presuppose uniformity throughout the cosmos, but they do not offer an hierarchy of evaluation anything like the Aquinian one with respect to coherence. To replace this system of order the encyclopedists offered nothing more than an *alphabetical* arrangement. They went over the Aquinian universe with a set of measuring tools, but produced no structure of thought in compensation.

Jefferson, in his range of knowledge and empirical curiosity, was the heir of the encyclopedists, but he was Aquinian in his tendency to fit everything observable into an orderly system. He had the totalitarian view, seeing forces not in isolation but as interactive. When the elder Adams had the puritanical stubbornness to stand up against popular clamor and question Jefferson's omniscience it cost him four years in the Executive Mansion.

So much for the antecedents. Consider the ideas expressed in Jefferson's letters to Adams in the light of the distinctions I have made, and the continuity and causality of history will be apparent. Now let us look at the history which Jefferson's ideas helped to make.

It is only in our time that anyone has, with any shadow of right, questioned the presuppositions on which the United States are founded. If we are off that base, why are we off it?

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Jefferson's America was a civilized country because its chief men were social. It is only in our squalid day that the chief American powers have been anti-social.

Has any public man in our lifetime dared say without a sneer, or without fear of ridicule, that Liberty is the right to do *ce qui ne nuit pas aux autres*, that which harms no one else? That was a definition of civic and social concept actually practiced. Such liberty, at least by program, was guaranteed the American citizen, but no other was offered him. Jefferson and Adams were responsible; they felt their responsibility. And their equals felt it. The oath of allegiance implies this responsibility, but, unfortunately it is not printed in red letters, and its meaning usually passes in an unheeded phrase.

One of the main implications to be gathered from the letters is that they stand for a life not split into bits. They tell of a kind of life that had wholeness and mental order. Their sanity and civilization, their varied culture and omnivorous curiosity stem from the encyclopedists, but they are not accompanied by the thinning, the impoverishment of mental life, which lack of structural order was to produce in a few decades.

Neither of those two men would have thought of literature as something having nothing to do with life, the nation, the organization of government. Of course, no first-rate author ever did think of any of his books in this manner. If he was a lyrist, if he was crushed under a system, he was speaking of every man's life in its depth; if he was Trollope or Flaubert he was thinking of history without the defects of generic books by historians which miss the pith and point of the story.

The pith and point of Jefferson's story is in a letter to Crawford, written in 1816: " . . . and if the national bills issued be bottomed (as is indispensable) on pledges

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of specific taxes for their redemption within certain and moderate epochs, and be of *proper denomination* for *circulation*, no interest on them would be necessary or just, because they would answer to every one of the purposes of the metallic money withdrawn and replaced by them." No other excerpt from the correspondence could better illustrate the clarity and depth of Jefferson's thought than that. Will the reader think me eccentric if I say that those eight lines should be cut in brass and nailed to the door of Monticello?

Ce qui ne nuit pas aux autres . . . Jefferson realized that "liberty" would be a mockery without financial liberty. ". . . no interest on them would be necessary . . ." Jefferson fought Hamilton's bank act to the last ditch; he knew that a currency unburdened by usury was essential for a real democracy. This was a part of Jefferson's totalitarian view; it proves his link with the Mediterranean mind. In totalitarian writings before Voltaire one does not find a blind spot for money. The Church fathers think down to detail; Duns Scotus has no cloudy obsession on this point. There is a great deal of Latin on intrinsic and extrinsic value of money. It links Jefferson with the three great novelists: Flaubert, Trollope, and, toward the last, Henry James got through to money. Marx, not working on a total problem, but on a special problem, which, one would have thought, of necessity would have concentrated his attention on money, merely went blind at the crucial point.

Flaubert and Jefferson have much in common in their concepts of life as a *whole*. Flaubert's working theory of *l'histoire morale contemporaine* arose from a perception of paucity, a perception of the paucity of perception registered in historians, the shallowness of their analysis of motivation, their inadequate measurements of causality.

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Stendhal, Michelet, Flaubert, and the Goncourts differ as individuals, but they were all of them on the same trail: they wanted to set down an intelligible record of life in which things happened. The mere statement that so and so made a war, or that so and so reformed or extended an empire, is much too much in the vague. The whole gist of Flaubert was a fight against maxims, against abstractions, a fight back toward a human and total conception. Jefferson, on the future of American democracy, exhibits an identical total view.

The idea, put about I know not why by I know not whom, that Jefferson was a wafty and imprecise rhetorician disappears in a thorough perusal of his letters. One could quote examples from his discussions of a wide variety of cultural and practical subjects, but his economic thinking has the most contemporaneity. *Ce qui ne nuit pas aux autres . . .* : on September 11, 1813, Jefferson wrote from Poplar Forest, "By comparing the first and last of these articles (this paragraph follows a table of figures) we see that if the United States were in possession of the circulating medium, as they ought to be, they could redeem what they could borrow from that, dollar for dollar, and in ten annual installments; whereas the usurpation of that fund by bank paper, obliging them to borrow elsewhere at seven and one half per cent, two dollars are required to reimburse one." Apparently it may take a seventy billion dollar depression, not just a thirty-five billion dollar one, to make Americans reread their Jefferson.

The idea that you can tax idle money dates back through a number of centuries. These questions have intrigued the best human minds, Hume, Berkeley, a whole line of Catholic writers, and a whole congeries of late Latin writers. You can not write or understand any

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history, and you can not write or understand any serious history of contemporary customs in such a form as the Goncourt and Flaubert novels, if you persist in staving off all inquiry into the most vital phenomena; that is, into the nature and source of the "carrier," of the agent and implement of transference. A total culture such as that of Adams and Jefferson did not evade such investigation. And the histories of literature which pass over their treatment of economic problems are merely a shell and a sham.

Adams was anti-clerical (at least I suppose one would call it that) yet he wanted safeguards and precautions, whereby he attained unpopularity. They were both of them heritors of encyclopedism, but they inherited that *forma mentis* in an active state where definition of terms and ideas had not been lost. I mean, liberty was still the right to do *anything* that harmed no one else.

They both had a wide circle of reference, of knowledge, of ideas, with the acid test for hokum, and no economic inhibitions. The growth of economic inhibition in the domain of thought is a nineteenth century phenomenon to a degree that I believe inhered in no other country.

Adams and Jefferson existed in a full world. They were not English provincials, though grounded in the European cultural heritage. It was their fresh Americanism which liberated them from the sterility which followed the encyclopedists. Their letters abound in consciousness of Europe, and the truly appalling suburbanism that set in after the Civil War, our relapse into cerebral tutelage, did not afflict Adams and Jefferson. Not only were they level and contemporary with the best minds of Europe, but they entered into the making of that mind itself. Chateaubriand did not come to Philadelphia to lecture; he came to learn.

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If these random notes need lead to any lesson, the lesson is against raw ideology, which Napoleon, Adams, and Jefferson were all up against, and to which, as Adams remarked, Napoleon had in those days just given a name. If you want certain results, you must, as scientists, examine a great many phenomena. If you won't admit what you are driving at, even to yourself, you remain in penumbra. Jefferson was never in penumbra. And in 1813 he wrote to Adams, "You and I ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other."

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Trees

DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE

I SAW them first, the redwoods, at twilight; came on them unexpectedly, when I was not looking for them, but hastening somewhere else. At that late hour there was not another car parked at the gates, when my own was brought swiftly to a stop, to a reverent hushing of the engine.

A silent, awestruck, mortal mayfly, I walked fearfully between their boles, greater than the shafts of any temple, and threw my head back to see the last sunset light sweeping through the dark, sempeternal fronds. An incense of coastal fog, too, was flowing through the unattainable tops. My feet, on the deep humus carpet of centuries of needle-fall, made not a sound. Nowhere, in the mist rose-blurred with afterglow, was there a sound except the voice of a single bird, at his vespers, a disembodied voice in the clerestory of this sacred grove.

Time, out of eons we cannot number, was at a halt. Darkness would come, and another day, but not change. For the perfect thing, the unsurpassable act of creation, had been attained, created. Nothing good that would ever happen hereafter, no human construction, no mortal dreams of any sort of handwrought beauty, could surpass this. God, or Nature, had lifted a final hand from an ultimate miracle. Here let no human voice presume to preach. Here a brook ran, laving roots of trillium and stream orchis, wild ginger and the great white chalice blossoms of oxalis. Here some green slip of a warbler might praise without impiety. But let there be no other sound or motion.

What a story a redwood stump could tell, with its two

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thousand rings of annual growth. One of the outermost rings carries us back to the landing of the Pilgrims. Count back from there: 1619, 1618, 1600, 1500, 1400, 1100, 1099 — you are still only at the First Crusade. The proudest old families can seldom trace a clear record to those troublous times. And still we are not one third the way back to the heartwood.

Keep on counting, year by year. Your eyes will be sore and strained before you get back to the year when Alaric was sacking a fallen humbled Rome. And yet this proud, this lusty American tree, was already a strong young giant. When it was a sapling the Chinese were inventing paper. When it was a hopeful shoot, Pompeii, the pride of pagan pleasure cities, was buried under the ashes of Vesuvius. As the seed sprouted, Christ was born in Bethlehem.

There are older redwoods than this. Some must go back to the Golden Age of Greece; back to the time when Nebuchadnezzar ate grass. Kings may go mad; empires decay. But these forest kings know no decay; their empire is immutable — till man comes. To insect pest and fungus diseases they are practically immune.

The grove where I walked that solemn hour was set aside for the people of the United States. And the public fondly believes that the Save-the-Redwoods League, which did such splendid work, has saved all. Actually, only a fraction of our Sequoias are safe from the sawmills. The only reason that the sound of their grinding is low is that, momentarily, not much redwood can be profitably cut and marketed. When money can be made out of selling redwood, the mighty private holdings are going to come crashing down.

It isn't only redwoods, or even chiefly redwoods, that are endangered. Even if we had no redwoods, we would,

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here on the North American continent, still have the finest timber stands in the world. No other temperate country in historic times has ever owned so many sheer board feet of lumber, or so much of it valuable. Straight-grained, strong and clean, fitted to every use from paper pulp of the soft spruce to cypress piles that under water last practically forever, from the rich naval stores of the Carolina coastal pines to the sweet sap of New England's sugar maples, our eastern forests were once the wonder of the world, and, literally, the envy of kings and ministers of war.

Oriental nations covet our western trees. Japan is importing the rare and mighty Port Oxford cedar at a rate that spells its speedy destruction, unless the move to save it can be jammed through Congress soon. China, which has so recklessly stripped its own forests from its mountains, hungers as only a nation that has eaten its forests can, with a great hunger for our precious Alaska cypress.

Logs and shingles of western arbor vitae and incense cedar are practically eternal. Sugar pines, the mightiest pines in the world, Coulter pines with cones a foot long, Engelmann spruces reaching for Colorado's blue sky, ringing her mountain lakes, Monterey cypress under which a whole village population can stand, weeping spruces like fairy-tale trees come true — these are what we boast, between the Rockies and the Pacific. For their flesh, the sawmills whine and roar.

But when the great trees are gone, no invention of man can put them back. You cannot recreate an extinct organism. Often you cannot even restore the soil that a great forest needs, once it has been garnered to the ground by human harvest. I am not suggesting anything sentimental and impractical; I do not mean that the lumber industry should be abolished, for obviously, we

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need lumber. It is just because we need it that we shall have to take some care for our vanishing supplies. We shall have to see, for instance, that valuable timber trees are not wasted by being chewed into pulp, when soft, quick-growing trees would do just as well.

Up to the present we have, as a rule and as a whole, treated our forests as a mine. Forest Service has done splendid work in reforestation. It has worked out the theory and put into practice often on the most unpromising and nearly worthless lands, the whole principle of handling our forests as a crop.

Anybody can see that a forest is like a bank account. In the end you cannot take out more than you put in. Your banker cheerfully pays your cheques as long as there is a balance. When that is gone he looks blank; what else can he do? But we of today are rifling accounts and reserves that do not belong to us. We are raiding the Treasury of Mother Nature, peculating what it took her thousands of years to accumulate, and thieving from our own children because we are impoverishing the America of tomorrow.

Some parts of the lumber business have been, literally, sawing off the limb on which they are sitting. They are trying to "sustain the yield" from something that steadily dwindles, and is not proportionately replaced. Instead of retrenching or investing, they continue to live on their capital, at the scale of boom times. Because of the demand for pulp, they are hungering for mighty timber trees that should be reserved for other uses. They are wasters in our household.

The most wasteful methods of lumbering are not as heart-rending to anyone with a grain of patriotism as the destruction caused by forest fires. Between 1926 and 1930 an average of about 41,500,000 acres of our forests were burned over *every year*. So we simply send up in smoke

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timber reserves, as well as natural beauty (a cash crop to the towns and peoples situated near it) that many a thrifty European country would know how to multiply and use for its citizens.

Experts agree that about eighty-five per cent of all our forest fires are preventable. One fire in every three is started by a cigarette, pipe, cigar, or smoker's tossed-aside match. When you are in the woods do you think where you toss butts and matches? When you smoke in your car do you hurtle the burning tobacco out of it into the dry roadside grasses, or do you put it out first? Yes, you and I and all of us are potential forest-fire starters. If we ever were careless with our smokes (and I know no one who is not) then we can, none of us, know for certain that we are not responsible for damage, loss, even human deaths, that were never brought back to us.

Farmers start a huge number of forest fires by the practice of "burning off brush." Malice or deliberate "spite fires" must be blamed for about one fourth of all. Hot engine cinders formerly did more damage than at present. Only fifteen per cent of all fires in our national heritage of forests could be called of natural origin, lightning, for instance. We are literally burning up money, every year.

You think there is nothing that you can do about it? That between the inscrutable workings of Congress and the expert work of trained foresters, we, the public, can scarce intelligently take a hand in the situation?

Nothing of the sort. It's not enough to refrain from cutting down trees or starting forest fires.

You have a vote, haven't you? And, in the last analysis the congressmen and senators who pass or veto conservation measures, do not dare to quarrel with their electorate. True, your one vote, or a letter or telegram signed

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only by yourself, might not be heard in the clamor of opinion that besets every lawmaker. But if you will join your vote to those of others who think as you do, if you will add your voice to the great chorus from the people's throats, you will have done your patriotic duty toward the trees of this country.

I am not going, here, to mention any of the conservation societies by name, because I am not barking or ballyhooing for any one in particular. If you want to know what and where they are, ask your state conservation bureau, your state natural history survey; ask the biology teachers at the nearest college, or your county agent, or ring up the local Forest Service warden. Your newspaper editor also knows who they are. Some of these societies are better than others; some may be a mere blind for the wasters; others are on the lunatic fringe. Most are perfectly sincere and honest, and not at all visionary or impractical. They all study pending legislation, and know the right people to approach. They know, too, much more about my state and national congressmen than I do — how they have voted in the past, how they are swayed.

And, make no mistake, if you and I do not sway them, the wasters, the enemies of conservation, are going to do so. One of the most efficient lobbying machines in this country works unceasingly to get the forests out of government hands, into private ownership and, eventually, into the teeth of the pulp saws. This political machine watches every forest bill that comes up, and by blunt means or subtle, it opposes the conservation of the American forests. It knows what forest bills are pending in your state and at Washington, even though most of us do not.

And there are such bills, all the time, in the making or breaking. The populace, which is supposed to speak

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with the voice of God, in a democracy, is very sentimental about trees. But it seldom takes any hand in voting the measures that will keep them standing. Only afterwards, when a desolation of stumps makes a landscape hideous and property nearly or quite worthless, do we wonder why "it wasn't stopped." It wasn't stopped because you and I didn't stop it. Ignorance of the lack of law is no defense.

A single instance: at the present moment if certain interests have their way the proposed enlarged Mount Olympus National Park is threatened with the shearing of about "140,000 acres of heavily timbered country" (to quote the lowest estimate I have seen). This eliminated area "supports a stand of timber estimated at six billion board feet." The most conservative surmise puts the amount of Douglas fir on this area that is *not* being made safe for posterity at 755,000,000 board feet, and Douglas fir, next to the giant sequoias, is the most magnificent tree in America. This is the same as saying that it is the second finest tree in the world. Growing with this tree of somber beauty and tragic destiny, are 282,000,000 board feet of Sitka spruce, the most valuable timber tree of the Pacific Far Northwest, and easily in second place in any region where it grows. To be sacrificed ultimately, I fear, there is a third nobleman among trees, namely 399,000,000 board feet of western juniper, that picturesque giant of old, of which Muir said, "It dies standing, and wastes insensibly out of existence like granite, the wind exerting as little control over it alive or dead as it does over a glacial boulder." Besides these three forest aristocrats, many others, notably western hemlock, the king of hemlocks anywhere in the world, may be denied permanent protection, in the quantity of three and a half million board feet. Lumbermen call them "pulp," the silver and

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white firs, and the mountain hemlock. Call them what you like. The crime of cutting these trees would be that they now belong to the public and in Mt. Olympus National Park they would be yours and mine forever, by every exertion that can be brought to bear. There can be only one reason that I can see for not making a park of them and that is that somebody, sooner or later, expects to make his pile by cutting them down. His pile will vanish into his bank account. All you and I will see will be a sawdust pile, mountain high.

I might add that the figures quoted above are far more conservative than those of some other estimates. But I am actually accepting the figures of "the opposition" and I say that without dispute; the case for conservation of such a magnificent stand of valuable and beautiful forest can be safely founded on them. I believe this stand should become part of a national park.

Until I roused myself up to learn something about it, I had no faintest notion what difference it made whether trees are in "national forests" or "national parks." I find that most people I talk to don't know, either — even the sort of men who make it a point of pride to vote intelligently, to distinguish accurately between every shade of Republican, every sect of Democrat. The most important practical distinction is this: that most government timber lands can, at official discretion and without legislation, be released from public ownership to private ownership. But once a forest becomes a national park, only a special act of Congress can ever wrest it from us.

This is not to say that the national forest services mismanage their lands; on the contrary, they plant, they fight fire; they control cutting and grazing. They build up abused, burned-over or decadent forests into fine condition. They make forests where none were before.

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But in a national park there is neither cutting nor grazing except by wild animals. A national park holds its groves sacred and inviolate to posterity. Virgin stands, forest beauty that brings health and inspiration to the American people, superb timber reserves needing no reforestation, are appropriate to administration by the National Park Service. And that is why some branches of the lumber industry rage at its very name, and make incantations of hate in the Senate lobbies. Do you let them do all the talking? Do you *really* care what becomes of our national heritage of trees? Or do you just frame Kilmer's *Trees* and hang it over your desk, and let the snarling sawmills sweep through the forests of your own state, without knowing whether that timber was pried out of public ownership, or whether it is being cut scientifically and with proper regard to the future?

This country, these United States, are our home, all the home we have, or want. Within their border there is room for private ownership, and government ownership. This applies to our forests as to other holdings and other industries. American democracy still allows for the individual voice and the voice of the whole people. The whole people so fought for, and so wrought this nation that its wealth and its beauty should be the good of all. The patriots, the pioneers, the statesmen, the women at their mighty unsung task of giving birth, of upbringing, the patient, underpaid educators at their task of civilizing, did not give their efforts and their years to have this country razed of its groves, its woods and templed hills. What are those temples, if they are not God's own — your trees?

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Invisible Censorship

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

WHEN Graham Hutton, assistant editor of the London *Economist*, spoke before the New York *Herald Tribune* Forum early in September, he raised a very interesting question. He complained of the "self-censorship" of the English press. His words may not have been adequately reported; but, so far as he was quoted in a newspaper clipping which I have before me, he attributed this "self-censorship" to two causes: predatory libel laws, and the control by three millionaires of three newspapers with a total circulation of more than six million.

In other words, the English press is not outspoken because it is far too easy for any citizen, mentioned unfavorably in its columns, to claim and receive thumping damages: and it is also unlikely to air its mind with a real vitality or variety because a large proportion of it has only three minds to air. Thus far any candid reader would, I believe, agree with Mr. Hutton: and might even congratulate himself that no such state of affairs exists in America, where there still remains a good deal of independent newspaper ownership. But the word "self-censorship" opens up further vistas which Mr. Hutton did not have time to explore or did not think of exploring, and which, for all I know, he would not think worth the exploration. It put me in mind of something which an eminent American journalist told me not so long ago: that English foreign correspondents — whatever the political color of the newspapers they serve — present substantially the same picture of foreign affairs; and that this is not due to any official censorship, but to some

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mysterious, telepathic agreement between the official mind and the editorial mind. This may be incorrect, but I have yet to find anyone who is able to deny it explicitly; and, lacking explicit denial, I take leave to remark that it is also full of suggestion.

In the first place, there is the suggestive fact that no one would ever think of making such a statement about the American press. The American press still carries its debates beyond the confines of its editorial page. Its presentation of foreign news may be deliberately onesided — witness the contradictory accounts of the present war in Spain; but there *is* a contradiction. There is as yet no identification of the official interest with the public interest; only an identification of the private interest with the public interest. An industrious reader, feeling that his newspaper has given him only one side of some foreign question, may, with some trouble to himself, discover the other side in another publication. True, the reader must be industrious: but the debate exists. And it exists, partly because there is still no foreign crisis which threatens this country with immediate disaster; and partly because there has yet to arise in American democracy a time when private opinion — as embodied in an editorial policy — has altogether given up the notion that it is a law to itself.

And that is why the suggestion which lies concealed in the word "self-censorship" eventually leads us away from the press, and from presentation of foreign news, into regions where speculation is the only guide — that is, into what might be loosely called the psychology of political democracy. One should, however, pay Mr. Hutton's interesting speech the courtesy of proceeding with it a little further. As an example of "self-censorship" he produced that rather too famous example of editorial agreement,

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when English publishers, again despite the absence of any official instruction, refrained for months from mentioning the *affaire Simpson*. He seemed to think that in this instance the publishers were in the right; that, since the English feel like one man about the monarchy, this was a national affair; and that, therefore, "the publishers sounded each other — as they did, and would do again, on the brink of war." The result of this "sounding" was a concerted silence.

It is certainly curious, instructive, and even (if you feel that way) admirable that the press should have refrained from making political capital out of a monarch who, in his symbolic capacity, was beginning to bristle with political implications, and who was subsequently removed from his throne — in the best mid-Victorian tradition — for a political cause and with a moral effect. But the really interesting feature about this editorial silence to my mind is — *pace* Mr. Hutton — not the light it throws upon the Englishman's feeling about monarchy but the light it throws upon his feeling about democracy. He had been arbitrarily deprived of information which touched him very nearly and had for months been common gossip in America and Canada. Surely a brick, if only a little brick, might have been hurled through the windows of one, if not all, of those three newspaper millionaires! Surely a mob, even a minute mob, might have advanced upon the offices of at least one of those reticent newspapers! Reticence is not a democratic virtue; and here was a nation deprived, in spirit at least, of its democratic right to a free press.

Now it would be very difficult for any group of men, without governmental backing, to impose this kind of silence upon the public without an assurance that the public would be willing to bear the imposition. In other

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words, it begins to look as though Mr. Hutton's "self-censorship" were not horizontal but vertical; arising, not merely from fear of the libel laws or from monopoly, but from some mysterious prompting of the public itself. If this is indeed the case — and I have no right to do more than *suggest* that it is — then it marks a new stage in the life of political democracy. After all, as Mr. Hutton went on to say, the American press is "blunter" than the English press. It is not haunted and harassed by libel laws which are both inexplicable and predatory; nor is it given to silence in moments of national crisis. I don't suppose that anyone would care to deny that the reporting of news in this country is colored by the editorial policies of the various newspapers, that no very distinct line is drawn between news and propaganda. But at least the news is more accessible. The American public has at least the opportunity of choosing which kind of propaganda suits it best; and may even at times avail itself of this choice. The absence of rigid libel laws, even though it lead to such flagrant injustice as was shown by the press in the Hauptmann trial, does remove one kind of "self-censorship;" and as for "self-censorship" in the wider sense, the American press would never have dared (even in the unlikely event that it wished to dare) keep its public in total ignorance of important domestic news.

Could this mean, perhaps, that in America we have something like public "consent;" and that in England we have something which is beginning to look like public "acquiescence." "Consent" is a word which still has more meaning in theory than in practise, but it means something. In the case of America, it means a democracy sufficiently sure of the permanence of its institutions not to mind having its dirty linen washed in the open; pre-

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ferring, indeed, that this should be done. But American democracy is so far in the rear of progress that it is agitating itself over reforms, experiments, and rebellions which England, for example, underwent many years ago: it has not yet reached that stage when its future, as a political democracy, is ominous and obscure. That is the stage when "self-censorship" appears, if it is to appear at all. . . .

"Self-censorship," or invisible censorship, is a willingness on the part of the public to blind itself to unpleasant facts; it lies beneath those regions where free speech, free assembly, and freedom of the press are supposed to operate, and do, in English life, still ostensibly operate. It may be a purely English phenomenon. It may even be a good phenomenon. It is certainly preferable to those visible censorships which encourage the public with concentration camps or worse. In England it is psychological rather than political, it comes from within rather than from without: and the only way to analyze it is to take some visible English censorship and see how that works and why.

It so happens that England and America have both suffered from a form of censorship which in England is called the Obscene Libel laws. This is an attempt to keep sex out of literature and, so far as possible, out of life. It ranges from the banning of sexual information to the banning of such works as *Ulysses*. The former kind of banning does produce its moments of macabre gaiety; as when the Bishop of London, during a debate in the House of Lords, remarked that he would like to build a bonfire of contraceptives and dance around it. But when the obscene libel laws begin to interfere with literature in general, their work does not even have incidents of this kind to save it from a monotonous dreariness. Of all re-

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cent cases, the most notorious was undoubtedly that of *Boy* by James Hanley. *Boy* was not exactly a light-hearted novel; it was, in fact, gloomy and melodramatic, not a promising combination. But it was painfully sincere — the story of a boy who ran away to sea, endured the sordid life of a ship's forecastle, and, having contracted syphilis in Alexandria, was murdered by his captain. Whatever effect this may have had upon its readers, it could scarcely have been one of excitement; if anything, the novel leaned over backwards in its plea for chastity and the virtuous life. After the book had been on sale for some three and a half years, however, the police of Bury took several copies of it from the shelves of a local library, the publishers were charged with aiding and abetting the publication of an "obscene" libel, and were subsequently fined four hundred pounds at the Manchester Assizes. They withdrew *Boy* from circulation; but were still liable in respect of every copy that had already been sold. There was nothing to stop a policeman in some other part of England from doing just what the Bury police did; and this might go on for years and years, until there were no more copies of *Boy* left, no money to pay fines, no publisher.

The method is significant. The police and the magistrate become the censors of literature. The police, it is perhaps only to be expected, are suspicious of what they cannot understand. The magistrate, though better educated, feels it his duty to protect the minds of his own and other people's daughters, particularly if they are under the age of eighteen. (Indeed, it is not only people's daughters who have to be protected, though this argument is generally considered the most forcible of all; soldiers — to depart for a moment from the obscene libel laws — must also be guarded. Alarmed by the Incite-

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ment to Disaffection act of 1934, some printers in England refused to print a pacifist children's story, because it might fall into the hands of a soldier.) The fact that literature can be judged by its hypothetical effect upon the minds of young people is serious enough; but the real point, to my mind, lies in the origins of this kind of judgment. The judgment is variable, one book may be taken and another left; but the origins are constant. For the fear of obscenity began with the rise of nineteenth century middle class democracy; and the police and the magistrates are, in this instance at any rate, the agents of the middle classes.

In America, this kind of censorship has been very savage. Witness the efforts of the late Anthony Comstock. But comparisons are not easy because, among other things, different States have different laws. But we have had very liberal judgments in such cases as *Ulysses* and *God's Little Acre*; and it seems now as if anything not obviously pornographic has an excellent chance of remaining in print, and that the public is inclined rather to protect its own morals than to have them protected by the verdicts of magistrates and by the societies for the suppression of this or that.

A moral censorship, which is of course an impairment of the freedom of thought, cannot be imposed without the consent of the public; cannot be imposed, that is, in any country where politics and morals are still held to be separate things. I have taken the obscene libel laws as an example of a visible censorship in England, because they throw some light upon the nature of the invisible censorship. They show that the English public is willing to accept the imposition of a middle-class morality, because that is its own morality: it still believes, deep in its heart, that a work of literature is undesirable if it is too out-

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spoken in sexual matters. And this kind of belief, oddly enough, may spread into regions which have little to do with sex and less with literature. Indeed, we have almost come back to those democratic vistas which Mr. Hutton revealed but did not explore. For the invisible censorship, the "self-censorship," of the English public is possibly moral and certainly middle-class. When one uses the word "public" in relation to England one thinks of the middle classes who, though they have long lost their economic power, have not lost their power to dictate behavior; whose notions of behavior, indeed, still permeate the nation from top to bottom. And their notions of behavior have an economic origin. They are the powerful relic of that nineteenth century democracy from which England may have departed in practise, but not in imagination: which once ruled the world, and which is now in danger, what is left of it, of complete destruction, for it could scarcely hope to survive another war. The middle-class attitude to this danger is to pretend that it does not exist, to avoid a damaging self-criticism. Though the country still enjoys a free press and freedom of speech, in the very limited meaning of those words, it does not enjoy freedom of conscience; it feels morally bound to look on the bright side of things and to neglect, wherever possible, their other side. "Self-censorship" is the censorship of conscience.

This middle-class conscience in England has the enormous support of insular tradition and revolutionary experience: a tradition already established when the Tudors seized the throne, an experience already mature when the Stuarts lost it. America's tradition is not yet constellated, and its revolutionary experience is less evolved. Moreover, the American middle classes have never been willing to assume the solid appearance of their counterpart

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in England. They have always been troubled by a volatile and distracting spirit, acquisitive, impetuous, full of ambition. They have never quite lost their desire to be something else; to get rich overnight and to enjoy the power and prestige of great wealth. Their history is full of migrations. They have never settled down to that life of intricate social distinctions which makes the English middle classes so solid and so invulnerable. Even in the sentimental years between the 'forties and 'sixties, they were oddly dissatisfied with themselves; and in the great industrial boom which followed the Civil War their effort to impose their own standards was only partially successful. They called for sobriety and chastity, but the classes below them, increased by wave after wave of immigrants from Europe, were not very tractable.

It is true that a democracy, founded upon the ideals of the eighteenth century, and coming of age among the practises of the nineteenth, must produce a powerful middle class. But the American middle classes have always been attacked from above, from below, and from inside themselves. If they have not imposed a restraining conscience upon others, it is because they have not experienced the sort of life which would permit them to impose it upon themselves. Wealth from above, immigration from below; the curious interactions of geography and economics; an inner restlessness — they have been attacked by all these. There have been areas and periods in which their ideas of good behavior have been particularly strong, but the ideas have been more rigorous than rooted; the areas have never spread; the periods have never lasted. Indeed, the historian might still find in them some vestige of that curious and passionate individualism which the European middle classes displayed in the *annus mirabilis* of 1848; a ferment, not a fixative. He

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might add that, since it is now too late for the American middle classes to possess their own democracy, that individualism will not have the chance to turn into something stoical and self-contained. Nor do these two epithets at all fit the genius of the American people; for, whatever the genius of the American people may or may not be, it is certainly impatient. And that is why, when and if this vehement and critical democracy reaches a stage when experiments no longer satisfy, there may not occur an American self-censorship.

When English democracy was flourishing, or still appeared to be flourishing, it could afford the luxury of self-criticism. It could afford a republican movement in the 'seventies, a semi-revolutionary unrest just before the War, just as easily as it could indulge in a Charles Dickens or a *Life And Labour In London*. But when the shadows began to close in, as they did soon after the War, one was able to observe that strange, unlovely, but by no means contemptible phenomenon, the dictatorship of the middle class conscience. The General Strike, the Gold Crisis, the abdication, passed into history with little more than a murmur. The country was holding its own, more than its own, but the shadows lengthened, and are lengthening still. At such a time, says the middle class conscience, one must look at what lies in the sunshine and look away from what lies in the shade.

Even the people who live in the shade, and are anything but middle class, seem to have accepted this point of view. They do not make themselves heard. "The British workingman . . . in his inarticulate way is intensely patriotic and won't stand for any 'monkey stuff' about the King, or the Army, or the Empire. . . . I marvel why they (the unemployed) are not more rebellious. Is it lack of spirit, or lack of intelligence? I am

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inclined to think it is shrewd common sense . . ." (*Ordeal in England*, by Sir Philip Gibbs, p. 162.) The fact is that Sir Philip Gibbs, in his ingenuous way, is a spokesman for the middle class conscience. He won't stand for any "monkey stuff" about the workingman. Confronted with the spectacle of the Tyneside or of South Wales, he does not marvel at the existence of such desolate regions, but at the courage and patience of those who inhabit them. Good behavior is his ideal; and his voice is much more widely heard than the voice of Sir Stafford Cripps or of Harold Laski or of John Strachey or, indeed, of South Wales and the Tyneside.

It is a self-censored picture, of which *Ordeal in England* is an exaggerated instance, that English democracy attempts, not without success, to present both to itself and to the world. In America, where political democracy is not so advanced historically, and where there is always likely to occur such violent self-criticism as that embodied in the C.I.O., the picture still refuses to be censored. It may be badly distorted by this or that form of propaganda; but the psychology of American democracy is still a hopeful one; and though a middle class conscience may distort, it does not dictate. For a hopeful democracy, while it does not welcome the hard truth about itself, is not yet able to persuade itself that the truth can be lived down, and that the remedy for social ills is good behavior on the part of those who are sick.

"Invisible censorship" cannot be weighed and analyzed, only detected. Anybody who has read *Ordeal in England* will recognize it there, in the apparent balancing of good and bad, the unconvincing candor, the ingenuous and hollow optimism. When it finds a more subtle articulation, one can admit that it has in it an element of courage and sanity; and its more subtle articulation is

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usually to be found in the contemporary English novel. The novel is naturally responsive to this inward censorship, for the novel is deeply indebted to middle class democracy. It has grown up with it, thrived upon it, and criticized it. It has made itself sensitive, not only to the minutest and most complex of social distinctions, but to the dreary areas out of which those social distinctions sprang; for it shared spiritually in those noble reforms which saved the nineteenth century from going into history with a character, sociologically speaking, of unrelieved black. But today it makes, at best, only a passing reference to the dark side of English democracy.

Oh yes, the novel is art, and cannot force itself away from art and into sociology. If it were to become the stern critic of democracy, determined to throw light upon the lives of those people whom Sir Philip Gibbs dismisses in his airy clubman's way, then it would probably not be good art, nor would it convince anyone except those who are already convinced. And yet you feel, as you read the contemporary English novel, that it is looking backward and not forward, and that, if it would only take a chance, even a chance of being bad art, it would at least recover its vigor. For it is not vigorous now. It seems to have fallen under some kind of a spell. It reaches, in many instances, a technical perfection; and can boast, in the person of Somerset Maugham, the most complete technician in the English-speaking world. It answers to the inmost desires of its audience, which, when all is said and done, is predominantly middle class; and presents a picture of England which is sometimes dubious but never ruthless. Writers like Alec Waugh and, more successfully, Compton Mackenzie carry on the Galsworthian tradition of a polite and remote pessimism; but the young writers seem to be living only in a fragment of England. Could it be

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that the middle class conscience has invaded and tainted the very springs of their art? That to write about the manifest decay of democracy in, shall we say, the Tyneside has silently become one of those things that are "not done?" If this is the case, if good form in the public school sense has entered into the secret places of art, then we can see what invisible censorship, self-censorship, the censorship of conscience can really do. I merely suggest here that this is what has happened in England: that the reticence of the press, the resignation of the working classes, the unenterprising character of the novel, all fit into the same psychological pattern.

Nobody would pretend that the sociological novel in America has reached any very great height; but it is written, and it is encouraged. It can become a document like *Studs Lonigan* or a document like *In Dubious Battle*. For the American novel is not imprisoned inside an intricate social pattern, nor is it invaded by that hopelessness about the fate of Europe which (so John O'London's *Weekly* once said in a very kind and intelligent rebuttal of an article of mine) has vitiated the English novel. Indeed, the American novel, from the 'nineties onward, reveals itself as often as not in a state of rebellion. Frank Norris' *The Octopus* and *The Pit*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* — these books are in its life-stream, and they are direct attacks upon the greed and the carelessness of political democracy. Sometimes the rebellion takes the shape of criticism of manners, and you get the early Sinclair Lewis. Sometimes it is psychological, like the Freudian novels of Waldo Frank; sometimes it is esthetic, and produces its last document in Carl Van Vechten's *Parties*. The rebellion has concentrated itself successfully upon the moral tyranny of the middle-class conscience, and it has fought

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with less success but equal persistence upon wider fronts. But rebellion in one form or another, from the proletarian to the polite and back again, is something which the American novel cannot help expressing. The list of abuses which it has exposed and of names which have assisted in the exposure is formidable and significant; it is able to look things in the face, and if its look is often innocent of artistry, it is a forward look. A forward-looking novel implies, at least, a public not entirely dedicated to looking backward. A novel-reading public still falls largely within the classification "middle-class;" and the novel could not have maintained its rebellion if the rebellion had not found, somewhere within that classification, an urgent and continuous response.

And if we have a visible propaganda, but not an invisible censorship in America, surely it is because this country was never in the grip of a self-assured middle class, as was mid-Victorian England; and is therefore not susceptible to the magic of that mid-Victorian relic, the middle-class conscience. Whatever else they may or may not do, it is scarcely probable that Americans will fall under the spell of good behavior. Or else one could argue that America seems destined to be the reservoir of European democratic experiments, and that, until these experiments have lost their enchantment, this democracy will not lose its hope for a democratic future, unsevered from its past. Even if it were to lose that hope, I doubt if self-censorship would be its next step; for self-censorship is only one kind of substitute — either gallant or deluded, as you please to see it — for hope: hope which is the lifeblood of political democracy, as it must be of every system which is not entirely reactionary.

If England were to indulge in an American self-criticism, there would be less chance for peace in Europe

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even than there is today. To that extent, its invisible censorship may be called a good thing. Since it checks the free flow of the creative and political spirit, it is difficult to think of it as other than a bad thing. But, good or bad, it is full of interest to students of democracy. I have not attempted to do more than suggest its existence. But if someone would really take the subject up; distinguish government and press control from inner control; separate the forces within from the forces without; show, in effect, what happens to the noble "freedom" of liberal philosophy when the imagination no longer dares to look freely into the future — he would have made a considerable contribution to the history of our times. And if his researches finally led him to a contrast between English patience and American impatience, we might know more about the psychology of democracy than at present it is given us to know.

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Novelist of America: John Dos Passos

MASON WADE

FOR many years America has awaited her novelist: a writer who could somehow fix her sprawling shapelessness convincingly in words. Many have felt the call to realize the dream of the Great American Novel; so many that the phrase itself has become a sneer in the mouths of our critics. The great majority of the attempts have been inept: either the authors were ambitious beyond their capabilities, or at best they added but another to the great collection of fictional studies of some one facet of the American scene. We have good regional novelists and good class novelists and good character novelists, but only one writer has made a serious and successful attempt to depict America as a whole in fiction — not just a region or an individual or a group of individuals, but the whole vast congeries of regions, classes, and individuals which is America. That man is John Dos Passos, and his achievement has not yet received the attention that it deserves. He has not been honored with the Pulitzer prize and he is more widely read abroad than at home. But his five important novels constitute an unequaled portrait of twentieth century America, and suggest that the dream at which so many mock is being realized at last.

Dos Passos is singularly well prepared by birth and environment for the vast task he has taken upon himself. His father was a New York lawyer, the son of a Portuguese immigrant. His mother came of old Maryland and Virginia stock. He himself was born in Chicago just before the turn of the century, and as a child lived in Mexico, Belgium, England, Washington, D. C., and on a

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Westmoreland County farm, in tidewater Virginia. He was educated at a New England preparatory school and at Harvard. After his graduation from college, he went to Spain to study architecture, but this plan was interrupted by the Great War, which led him into the volunteer ambulance services of the Allies, and finally into the United States Medical Corps. After the end of the war he worked as a newspaper correspondent and free lance in Spain, Mexico, New York, and the Near East. Thus he became qualified to write with understanding and penetration of a nation made up of many nations and many racial traditions, of people of all classes from the highest to the lowest, and of the obscure but potent social forces which have been working in America since the turn of the century. He is writing of people and things he has known, seen, and felt at first hand, and from this fact arise the vitality and conviction which inform his work.

Besides this background which any writer might well envy, Dos Passos has been endowed with a superlative natural equipment for his work. It is his sensitivity and his feeling for language, coupled with his zest for experience, that make his books important. He is a natural reporter, in the best sense of the word, tremendously interested in what is going on around him and relishing all manner of sensation, and in addition he has the intellectual equipment necessary to order his impressions. He is aware of the great forces of social change at work in the four decades he has known at first hand, and is sympathetic to the attempts to build a better life. Yet his common sense and feeling for the fellowship of men have saved him from a crippling eccentricity or a wild-eyed radicalism. He is both romanticist and realist, and possesses a poetic feeling tempered by experience. He has been too much involved in what he is writing about to

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strike a literary attitude toward it; he has been saved from preciousness and the Ivory Tower by participation. His writing has been affected by the work of Joyce, Proust, and Stein — as that of any serious and sensitive writer of our time must be — but these influences have been thoroughly digested and fused into a personal style and idiom. And his common sense has saved him from the follies of the isolated pioneers of language. He knows the importance of being understood, and is free from literary snobbery. Finally, he has developed a remarkable ear for the speech of all sorts of Americans, and he has the ability to reproduce what he hears.

His first book, which was published in 1920, arose directly out of his war experiences and gives little indication of what was to come in the future. *One Man's Initiation* is a highly subjective record of Dos Passos' life as an ambulance driver with the French, thinly disguised as fiction. The book is as plotless as a diary, and the incidents are awkwardly handled, although one or two of them have some dramatic force. The writing is callow and inexpert: it is largely romantic poetic prose, heavily indebted in style to the Imagists. It is clear that Dos Passos was still under the influences of his Harvard years, when Amy Lowell was the idol of the literary undergraduates if they were not worshipping at the altars of the Renaissance or the romantic revival. The book was published in England in the postwar reaction to hyper-patriotism, probably as an indication of what the heroic young men at the Front really thought. The spirit of the book is poles removed from that of the verse and fiction published during the war years to fan the patriotism of the masses. In it is evident a vague feeling of revolt against the senseless waste of life and material, developing at the close of the book into sympathy with a romantic sort of socialism or

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anarchism. But this feeling is never formularized, and there is much more of the bright young man enjoying sensations than of the disillusioned and bitter rebel.

Three Soldiers, which appeared in the following year, is a different book. Somehow Dos Passos matured in the short interval between the two novels. Perhaps it was that he had time to reflect before he wrote, instead of just slapping his sensations on paper while they were still pulsing in his head. Perhaps what he saw of the Peace, and its effects, relieved him of any romantic delusions that survived his war experiences. Perhaps it was just normal growth, accelerated by the pace of the time. Whatever the reason, *Three Soldiers* gives no indication of being the work of the same man who wrote *One Man's Initiation.* It is a simply written and exceedingly powerful novel, one of the two or three really important American war books. It is the story of men caught in the military machine, the record of the war experiences of three young Americans: a young college-trained musician and composer from New York, a farm boy from Indiana, and the son of an Italian immigrant from San Francisco. We see the soldier's life from training camp to death or demobilization through the eyes of one or another of these three, and they become so much alive that we feel their emotions with them, smell their sweat and dirt, and long like them to escape from the machine which has crushed their personalities into a common mold. It is not a pleasant book, and some have called it unduly sordid. But that is not true. It is merely honest, faithful to the true nature of war — war without parades, brass bands, gorgeous uniforms, waving flags, and the host of delusions which these things breed in the human head. It is a powerful indictment of war, but only by implication and not by sermonizing. There is rebellion and revolt in this

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book against the system that makes such things possible, but the main characters do not associate themselves with any mass movement against that system. Chrisfield, the Indiana farm boy, shoots an officer who had been brutal to him, and gets away with it in the confusion of a battle. Fuselli, the Italian store clerk, shirks the actual fighting by remaining at the base and contracts venereal disease. And the most sympathetic character in the book, the musician John Andrews, tries to escape after the War to take up his work again, but is caught by the red tape of the military machine which does not permit its cogs to be individuals. But these are personal revolts, and the minor characters who do believe in world revolution are set apart from the rest, as eccentrics and crack-brained dreamers. Eisenstein, the only real revolutionary thinker in the book, is usually referred to as "that goddamned kike" and looked down on by the others.

Yet this is not a book that would meet with the official approval of any ruling system. It is effective in its denunciation of the power that is able to warp men's lives to its will, regardless of the individual — the more so because the indictment is not by rhetorical phrases but arises tacitly from the bald honest narrative of what happened to many men in the normal course of war. There is a great feeling for the common man in this book, not the apostrophized stuffed figure hailed by Walt Whitman or the idealized Hero of other books, but just the mass man, confused, dirty, a little dull of brain, sick and sore from the things being done to him by forces he only dimly sees and certainly does not understand. This man is the constant central character of a book which seems to shift its interest from one character to another. He is the character who makes this book remarkable among second novels and a good book by any standard.

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Three Soldiers seems to have been a premature anticipation of the later Dos Passos, because the books that followed it were not of the same high quality. In 1922 Dos Passos published a book of slight verse and the first of the several travel books which he has written from time to time between novels. These last have a personal quality which make them stand out among other books of their kind, and are interesting as storehouses of the experience which their author was later to use in his novels. In 1923 another novel appeared, *Streets of Night,* which is a curious production to come from the author of *Three Soldiers*. It reads like a typical first novel. It might have been written while Dos Passos was at Harvard, and yet it bears certain traces of being aimed at the popular fiction market. It is as if Dos Passos felt, after finishing *Three Soldiers*, that he had written all that he could for the present about the War as he saw it, and was casting about, with no particular success, to find his *mêtier* in the field of general fiction. The result, in any case, is a thoroughly banal novel. For *Streets of Night* is arty and pretentious and a failure. Such plot as it has is a familiar variation of the well worn triangle formula. The characters are weak in themselves and weakly realized; the dialogue is wooden and unreal; the plot, quite aside from the stereotyped situation, is badly managed. The writing is poor of its sort, the callowly romantic manner. How Dos Passos could write such a book after the vigorous and vital *Three Soldiers* is a mystery that can only be solved by the supposition that *Streets of Night* was an earlier work rewritten, or purely a potboiler.

Yet it was only two years later, in 1925, that Dos Passos published *Manhattan Transfer*, the book that consolidated the reputation that he had made with *Three Soldiers* and that marks the beginning of the Dos

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Passos style. He had found himself and his function as a writer, and a number of people began to realize that a significant American novelist had come upon the scene. *Manhattan Transfer* is a kaleidoscopic panorama of twenty-five years of New York city life on all levels of society. It is not a character study of one individual or group of individuals, but of a whole city, as seen through the lives of a large number of people who typify the other millions. The central theme is the corrupting effect of the city upon the individuals that make up the Manhattan masses. By implication it is a sermon on the Biblical text that money is the root of all evil, for the universal corruption of personality evident in the book is laid at the door of money and money-getting, the evil spirit that dominates the greatest commercial center the world has ever known. None of the numerous characters are truly happy; they almost all come to bad ends: either they are betrayed by their frenzied money-grubbing or they become disillusioned and incapacitated for action, like Jimmy Herf, who may be called the protagonist of this novel whose chief character is a city. As the years go by, we watch the poor becoming rich and the rich becoming poor and the anonymous masses ground between the stones of wealth and poverty, and we see the tragic consequences of this ruthless economic process in a society based upon money. The book is highly realistic, more than a little sordid, and yet poetic in conception and feeling. Today, twelve years after it appeared, it remains the best attempt to catch in fiction the elusive quality of New York.

The book is something new among novels. It is a story woven of the threads of many lives, which sometimes cross and sometimes go their own ways. There is no plot: just the sum of many lives. The only thing like it in tra-

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ditional literature is Tolstoy's novels, though among the moderns the work of Joyce, Proust, and Stein has influenced Dos Passos. But as Sinclair Lewis has pointed out in an interesting essay on *Manhattan Transfer*, it is better than the work of these pioneers, simply because it is interesting. Lewis called it: "A book which the idle reader can devour, yet which the literary analyst must take as possibly inaugurating, at long last, the vast and blazing dawn we have awaited."

Dos Passos owes to Joyce the conception of a novel devoted to the life of a city (for *Ulysses* is more concerned with Dublin than Mr. Bloom), to Proust the use of significant detail and careful documentation, to Stein (of the *Three Lives* period) the notions of the importance of the simple lives of obscure people and the effectiveness of bald narration. But he added to his borrowings a great deal of his own: a feeling for the common man which led him to picture all the strata of life, a knowledge of life on the great majority of these levels, a sense of the universality of the evils that he found, a lyrical spirit, and some technical devices which are remarkable for their success — and for their failure, in the main, to put off the traditionalist reader.

It is impossible to summarize *Manhattan Transfer*, as it is impossible to put your finger on one phase of New York life and say, "This is the true New York." The technique of the book has been compared to that of the movies, and all of us know how hard it is to convey to others in words the visualizations we have seen on the screen through our own particular sensory system. It is enough to say that in this book are the stories of a rich man's son who becomes disillusioned with wealth when he works as a newspaperman, of a Wall Street plunger who ends as a nightwatchman mumbling of his great

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days, of a bookkeeper's daughter who becomes a popular actress and loses her individuality in portraying others on the stage, of a French seaman who becomes a bootlegging baron, of a rich boy who follows the family line and becomes a successful banker without ever having a thought, of a lawyer on the make who outsmarts himself, of a milkwagon driver who becomes a labor and political boss, and of a host of other, more obscure, members of the New York masses. The book opens with a birth and ends with a vagrant setting off on the road — any road away from New York. The technique is that of the movies, but not of the movies of Hollywood. There is no hero or heroine, and no scenario. It is closer to the technique of the documentary films which deal with anonymous masses and the rare individuals who stand out from them, but are more concerned with the whole than with any one part.

In 1926 Sinclair Lewis said of *Manhattan Transfer:* "It *may* be the foundation of a whole new school of novel writing." Lewis' prophecy has come true. Since this book Dos Passos has gone ahead, gradually forging for himself a personal idiom and technique which are so peculiarly his own that would-be imitators have been gravely discomforted. He is the true leader of the school of proletarian novelists, and a host of writers owe a debt to his work. None have thus far succeeded in surpassing his achievement, because he has grown and matured faster than any of his followers, and had a better equipment to begin with. Whether or not you like his politics, you must be grateful to him for leading the escape of American fiction from what Lewis called "ego-mongering," the flood of excessively personal and intimate outpourings in print of the troubles of sensitive souls in our machine civilization. Such books are not particularly

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good for either author or reader, and it was high time that some one of stronger mind led the way out of the fictional wasteland.

There are certain features of *Manhattan Transfer* which are highly significant in the light of Dos Passos' later development. They will be touched upon here, and dealt with more fully when they reach fruition in the later novels. First of all, there is the question of structure. Dos Passos has used the orthodox chapter structure only in *Streets of Night*. In *Manhattan Transfer* he first worked out an effective substitute, one with which he had experimented in *Three Soldiers*: a system of divisions and subdivisions which are complete in themselves and yet interrelated, like the movements of a symphony or sonata. In this book, too, are the beginnings of two new technical devices that he was later to make extremely effective. Short lyrical epigraphs introduce the various sections of the book. They are the outlets for Dos Passos' pent-up romantic and poetic sensibilities, in the midst of the realistic narrative. And toward the end of the book, he starts giving some historical significance to his work by dating the background through the use of popular songs, catch phrases, and other time-marks. Also his sympathy with the inarticulate natural radical, as opposed to the intellectual doctrinaire, begins to make itself felt. There is a little tinge of socialist thought in references to Jaurès' death, the dissatisfaction of the returned soldiers, the unrest of the people as expressed in strikes and in the I.W.W. movement, but as yet none of the semi-militant social consciousness of the later novels. And in Jimmy Herf, the child of wealth who has to work and becomes mildly radical after seeing both sides of life, and in Stanwood Emery, the rich Harvard playboy who sees life too clearly in its sordidness before he has really begun

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to live it, we find the beginnings of the one constant Dos Passos character, who often seems more than a little autobiographical. John Andrews of *Three Soldiers*, David Wendell of *Streets of Night*, Jimmy Herf, Stanwood Emery of *Manhattan Transfer*, and Richard Ellsworth Savage of *The 42nd Parallel*, *1919*, and *The Big Money*, all seem to be the same character conceived differently as Dos Passos matured. And they all develop from the frankly autobiographical chief character of *One Man's Initiation*. They all come of good family, they all went to Harvard or a similar college, they are all sensitive artistic individuals, dissatisfied with their heritage and troubled by their time. Only their eventual fates are different, though all are tragic. These characters together constitute a collective portrait of Dos Passos' own class, and the fate he deals out to them is indicative of his judgment of his own people. Because they represent his own class, and sometimes, perhaps, himself, he presents them sympathetically to the reader, although it is evident that he does not think well of them. It is the weakness of a mother for a son she knows to be worthless but nevertheless loves, despite all his transgressions. There are more admirable characters in Dos Passos' books, and others whom he holds up as the leaders-to-be in the utopian future, but none so well realized and none so typical of our time.

Manhattan Transfer was a sort of trial balloon for Dos Passos' later innovations in the technique of the novel. He did not publish another novel for five years, but the connection between *The 42nd Parallel*, which appeared in 1930, and the earlier book is clear, and the superiority of the new book obvious. He spent the intervening years experimenting with playwriting and doing another travel book, but his mind must have returned often to the prob-

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lems raised by *Manhattan Transfer*. Those five years were important ones in American history: they saw the last mad surges of the boom days and the ghastly collapse of the big money era into a depression which has brought America back to where she was in the restless years before the War. Dos Passos' social ideas underwent a radical change during this period, and there is much evidence of them in the new novel and the two others, *1919* and *The Big Money*, which followed it in 1932 and 1936. The three books together constitute a study of American life in the twentieth century, and through them all runs an underlying current of impending social change, of grave unrest, and of spiritual dissatisfaction. The last novel, *The Big Money*, marks a full stop in the midst of the depression, and a natural end or pause in Dos Passos' work in this field. He may be tempted to add to the portrait of America which arises from this trilogy, but it will be some years before the implications of these books, and the solution they suggest for the sociological American tragedy of our time, can either be proved or disproved by actuality. Meanwhile we have arrived at a good point of departure for a critical estimate of the whole undertaking, and of Dos Passos' work to date. And beyond all question, Dos Passos has a very real achievement to his credit: he has painted an unmatched portrait of America in what he calls the "bloody twentieth century."

The great point about the trilogy, and its superiority to other proletarian novels, lies in the fact that it does not preach the social doctrine which informs it tacitly. Instead, it demonstrates through personalization. As in *Manhattan Transfer*, and to a certain extent in *Three Soldiers*, Dos Passos picks his characters at random from all the various strata of American life. He tells their individual stories bit by bit, in more or less complete dra-

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matic divisions, like the chapters of the old serial movies. Sometimes the various narrative threads intertwine, sometimes they follow separate lines. Though there are a host of characters, the individuals are clearly differentiated and are not easily confused, as in Tolstoy's giant novels. The characters of the narrative are fictional, although some are clearly drawn from life, but all demonstrate the course of actual American lives from 1900 to 1930. Among them are an I.W.W. jack of all trades, a private secretary, a public relations counsel, a New Woman, a sailor, a young Harvard esthete, a Texas girl out for a good time, a radical agitator, a stock manipulator, a social worker, an inventor and manufacturer, and a chorus girl. These are the people, coming from all parts of America and swept together, hither and yon, by various social and economic forces, whose portraits are painted by Dos Passos.

Intermingled with their stories are impressionistic biographical sketches of various historical figures of the period: Eugene Debs, Burbank, Big Bill Hayward, William Jennings Bryan, Carnegie, Edison, Steinmetz, the elder LaFollette, John Reed, Randolph Bourne, Theodore Roosevelt, Paxton Hibben, Woodrow Wilson, the Morgans, Joe Hill, the Unknown Soldier, F. W. Taylor, Henry Ford, Thorstein Veblen, Isadora Duncan, Valentino, the Wright brothers, Hearst, Frank Lloyd Wright, Samuel Insull, and an anonymous vagrant. These are largely the captains and the kings, the public and secret idols of our time. They were chosen on the same basis as the fictional characters from the various levels of American society. Significantly, perhaps, the final section of the whole work is the sketch of the vagrant. Perhaps it was the author's intention thus to indicate the growing unimportance of individuals, great and obscure,

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and the rise to first place of the anonymous masses. However that may be, the biographies provide a historical frieze as a background for the fictional characters. They are done in such a fashion that each word counts; from the best of them it is possible to form a better living picture of the subject than from a formal full-length biography. Dos Passos understands the effectiveness of significant detail, particularly when of an ironic nature. In describing the short-lived public madness of the Valentino funeral, he closes the sketch thus: "The funeral train arrived in Hollywood on page 23 of the New York *Times*." That is the best possible way of stating just how dead Valentino was, as soon as the riots at his lying-in-state had subsided.

There are two other devices used as integral parts of the fictional form which Dos Passos has evolved for himself in these three books. There are the sections called The Camera Eye, which are poetic, highly subjective records of the period from the point of view of the artistic individual, usually Dos Passos himself. They are complete in themselves, but loosely connected. Taken together, they make up a record of Dos Passos' poetic sensibilities in development. They contain some of the finest writing in the three books, and the only writing that the common reader is apt to find difficult. For in idiom and in reference they are intensely personal, and they differ from the general style of the trilogy in their frequent use of Joycean devices and e.e.cummings-isms. But once the reader has overcome his sense of strangeness and feels at home in this idiom, he is much the richer for experiencing with Dos Passos the growth of his poetic consciousness, and for seeing through the eyes of a sensitive individual various facets of the life of the artist in our time. The other technical device made use of by Dos

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Passos, the Newsreel, consists of headlines, fragments of newspaper stories, popular songs, and other social minutiae, which inform the reader of the ideals, thought, moods, fads, and crazes of the period. These serve as time-marks in the panorama which is passing before the reader's eye. At first there seems to be no particular principle of selection, but as one Newsreel follows another, we observe that they are not as haphazard in composition as they seem. They furnish a salient stream of news and gossip as essential to the background of the narrative as the biographies. Thus, through the fictional narrative, the biographies, the Camera Eye, and the Newsreel, Dos Passos accomplishes his end — a well rounded picture of the era. It is one which could hardly be attained by any other means than those which he has forged for himself, and the novel form is far the richer for his experiments.

It is not a pretty picture which lies before us when we have finished these three books. Here is an America which grows at random, without plan or pattern, driven first one way and then another by the unrelated energies of uncoördinated individuals, whose conflicting struggles resolve into a force different from any of its components. This is an America whose civilization from day to day becomes more mechanical in its ruthlessness, as invention is crushed by capital, capital by industry, and industry and labor are at war in the fight for lower production costs. The masses of this America are cheapened and vulgarized by this process; they are concerned in their leisure only with trivialities which distract them from money-grubbing, and in their more serious moments they crucify the superior individuals who attempt intelligent leadership in various directions. For superiority is the great sin against the American credo. And through the whole structure of American society runs an ever

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increasing hysteria, which attains its zenith in the boom-day twenties, as we see them in *The Big Money*. No, it is not a pretty picture, but it does not belie the facts.

It can hardly be assumed that Dos Passos, as an artist of radical sympathies, approves of Alexander Hamilton's remark that "The people, your people, Sir, are a Great Beast." Yet the remark applies to the people of these books. Perhaps the author does not care if his creatures stink to high heaven, for he seems convinced that he is portraying the last stages of a society far gone in rot and decay and, granted that, it is to his advantage to show the full horrors of our civilization. He has done it without making his villains inhuman in their despicableness, without dwelling with loving bitterness on the vices of the order he despises. He understands men too well, in their infinite variety of vileness and goodness, to make dummies of them to serve as targets for his fire. As a propagandist — though it is hardly fair to call him that, for he is an artist — he is far more effective than the proletarian writers of the heavily underlining school. He does not warp the facts as he sees them to conform to a party line or an ideological doctrine. He is a reporter, not an editorializer, so he shows and does not preach except by parable. What he shows is a picture of a rising tide of discontent with a system that does not permit men to satisfy their needs, which are thus defined:

> At least a man needs to be notjailed notafraid nothungry not-cold not without love, not a worker for a power that he has never seen
> that cares nothing for the uses and needs of a man or a woman or a child.

And since many men have had grave difficulty in satisfying these basic human needs in our society in the last quarter century, it is not strange that most of the char-

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acters in these books are discontented in heart and spirit and mind. The vagrant of *The Big Money*, whose "needs knot the belly," is Dos Passos' symbol of this discontent in the midst of potential plenty. All the major characters share this discontent with the down-and-outer: from Richard Ellsworth Savage, the Harvard esthete turned public relations counsel, to Ben Compton, the self-educated radical leader jailed for trying to improve matters. It is the same in the case of the historical characters: Wright, Duncan, Ford, Reed, Bourne, Wilson, Bryan, all were afflicted with the same psychological malady, which might well be considered the major characteristic of our time. We find this mental sickness in the constant Dos Passos character referred to above, who appears to be autobiographical. John Andrews, the musician of *Three Soldiers*, is unable to compose the music he feels surging within him because of this malady, and comes to a miserable end trying to escape it. David Wendell, the student of *Streets of Night*, commits suicide because his attempt to escape from it in love fails. Stanwood Emery of *Manhattan Transfer* drinks himself to death because he does not like life as he sees it with his young, too clear eyes. Jimmy Herf, the newspaperman of the same book, goes on the road as a tramp, trying to escape from it. Richard Ellsworth Savage of *The 42nd Parallel*, *1919*, and *The Big Money* drugs himself with decadent dissipation, trying to forget the hollow absurdities of the advertising business. Only a few straw men at the top are content, and even they are vaguely troubled. This discontent, this sense of incompleteness, this hollowness of spirit, are the basis of the criticism that in Dos Passos' books there are no sympathetic or living characters. This criticism is plausible, at first glance, but mistaken: the reader supplies, out of sympathy and empathy, the emotion sug-

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gested by the plight of the characters. And after all, isn't the vitiation or distortion of the emotional system recognized as one of the great troubles of our time?

But what of the whole picture that emerges from Dos Passos' books? Is it a true portrait, or is it distorted and colored by his social sympathies, which are admittedly radical? Even to one of no radical sympathies, there is a painful rightness about the panorama of America unfolded in these books. Certainly it is no alien doctrine to urge that men should derive enough from their toil to satisfy their needs. Nor is it notably subversive to point out that all is not for the best in our present civilization, or to hope for a better world in the future. All this is age-old, but much of it has been forgotten in the frenzy of economic development since the Renaissance, so that it sounds strange to us in the mouth of a disciple of Karl Marx, whom Tawney called, with much reason, "the last of the Schoolmen." Is it too much to hope for something better, "to ponder," like Dos Passos, "the course of history and what leverage might pry the owners loose from power and bring back (I too Walt Whitman) our storybook democracy"? Or should we rather be content with the gospel according to J. Ward Moorhouse, the successful public relations counsel of the trilogy: "co-operation," "a statement that will allay unrest"?

Dos Passos has the revolutionary spirit, but he is more in the American tradition than in the Marxist. The revolutionary spirit has been called the great tradition of America by Granville Hicks: that it is, but not in a Marxist sense but in the old democratic sense of revolt against established canons and smug complacency, against too great power and threats to liberty of expression. From Tom Paine and the sorry ballad mongers of 1776 down through the Concord school of social think-

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ers, Whitman, Howells, Bellamy, the Muck Rakers and early Socialists, this tradition of revolt has persisted in one form or another in American literature. It is not Marxist revolt but largely the normal reaction of the artist against the man-in-the-street mentality. In Dos Passos' case the revolt has been intensified by the fact that he has lived in the most dollar-dominated era of our nation's history. But he has had the common sense to avoid the fate of so many radical writers, who are making evident the truth of George Plekhanov's remark:

> Michael Angelo said of himself: "My teaching will procreate a great number of ignoramuses." Unfortunately this prophecy was fulfilled. Nowadays it is Marx's teaching which is procreating ignoramuses. Of course that is the fault not of Marx but of those that utter so many follies in his name.

He has not allowed his Marxian convictions to dominate his sensibilities and to overcome his integrity as an artist.

To pose the great questions which are implicit in these books; to make us aware of the bathos and futility of modern American life; to make us see more or less completely the ill-starred course which America has taken for more than a quarter of a century; and yet to remain interesting to the common reader, is no small achievement. Dos Passos has done this and stands apart among the American novelists of our day: he alone is both serious and popular. It is difficult to find a comparison for his achievement. In his own way and with different methods and a far more catholic appeal, he is the Jules Romain of America: peculiarly native, and yet fully aware of the universality of our plight. Yet his work is clearer and more vivid and better knit than the Frenchman's. It would seem that America at last has a novelist who is able to present her worthily to the world.

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The Liberal Position

AMOS PINCHOT

BECAUSE, since the death of Lenin, we have seen socialism in Russia transformed into what seems, to all intents and purposes, a fascist despotism, many of us are asking the questions: Must socialism, with its centrally controlled economic system, necessarily run to fascism? Is it possible for a collectivist state, presided over by a powerful executive, intensively to control industry, labor, and farming — unless it abandons the pretense of democracy and delivers itself to a coercive dictatorship?

Walter Lippmann's latest book, *The Good Society*, is important because it deals with these questions, at least from an intellectual standpoint, as well, I think, as any book that has appeared in recent times. Bertrand Russell's *Freedom versus Organization* (1934) is better written and sheds a clearer light on some of the Marxian fallacies. *Marxism versus Socialism* by Vladimir Simkhovitch (1913) beautifully exposes the weakness of the Marxian conclusion that society cannot protect itself against the destructive tendencies of capitalism. For a discussion of the current results of collectivism, one can recommend no better book than the recently published *Collectivism — A False Utopia* by William Henry Chamberlin, well known as the author of *The Russian Revolution*. And *Assignment in Utopia* by Eugene Lyons vividly presents the stark and terrible record of Stalin's regime.

But *The Good Society* contains, in certain respects, a more comprehensive discussion, extending to the metaphysical foundations of both collectivism and liberalism. In fact it is sometimes too comprehensive. And its power

The Good Society. By Walter Lippmann. Little, Brown. $3.00.

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and clarity are marred by Mr. Lippmann's besetting sins — pomposity and a habit of over-reasoning his case, which in this instance is an exceedingly strong one.

Indeed the book would be easier to read if its author had not yielded to the temptation of including too many lines of thought, and of following them to the bitter end, without too much regard for their relative importance. For, if you crowd a score of even the best arguments into a single chapter, they become lost in each other, and, at the end, may be as lacking in form and structure as a mass of angleworms in a box. It is unfortunate that, by its effort for completeness, *The Good Society* loses interest in spots and tires the reader. Nevertheless, for those who can forgive these faults, the book is well worth reading.

I suppose that, at the present moment, America is thinking about itself with an intensity that has not been equalled since the reconstruction days after the Civil war. It is deeply interested in government and economics, and in discussing the extent to which the former should overlap the latter. It is watching Mr. Roosevelt's attempt to plant managed economy and the providential state, as Mr. Lippmann calls it, on American soil. It is wondering whether the business of controlling life in general, and economic life in particular, will continue. And if so, will it turn the country toward fascism or toward communism. Or, on the other hand, will the providential state and its providential leaders gradually peter out and disappear in the wreckage of unkept promises and grandiose pretensions?

The first half of Mr. Lippmann's book is, in essence, an attack on collectivism, and by inference that is more than inference, on President Roosevelt's philosophy, and that of the men whose thinking seems to guide the government. Also it is a prophecy, buttressed by historical par-

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allels, to the effect that our excursion into collectivism, or centrally managed economy, will prove disappointing; that it will reduce the fecundity of industry, and do away with the competitive market which alone, Mr. Lippmann believes, can properly govern prices and the volume of production.

And, finally, Mr. Lippmann contends that, having discouraged the creation of wealth, reduced employment, smothered development in stultifying uniformity, and debased the standard of living, collectivism must take refuge in militarism and war. Since these alone can furnish a temporary escape from the difficulties it has brought on itself by playing the role of Providence.

I do not mean that Mr. Lippmann says all this right out bang. He has his way, and a genius for not quite saying the thing. But the foregoing is the burden of the first half of the book. It is his recurring theme, to which is joined the reflection that the hostility which we have noticed on the part of providential states and statesmen to law, and especially to religion, is well founded. For in the human soul there is room for the worship of but one God at a time.

The following passage, I think, fairly represents Mr. Lippmann's attitude toward the coercive or authoritative principle of social control, which he sees as gaining an alarming ascendency in America as well as the rest of the world:

> The generation to which we belong is now learning from experience what happens when men retreat into a coercive organization of their affairs. Though they promise themselves a more abundant life, they must in practice renounce it; as the organized direction increases, the variety of ends must give way to uniformity. This is the nemesis of a planned society and of the authoritative principle in human affairs.

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Mr. Lippmann is not at his best when philosophizing, at least not for readers like myself, who prefer to have their ideas served simply. But in the chapter entitled *The Gods of the Machine*, he is pleasantly factual. And he performs a real service by pointing out that our move into collectivism can by no means be called a liberal move; that, on the contrary, it is definitely a backward step toward reaction. He describes the era when Colbert codified the industrial laws of France, when he regulated the volume of production, the price, the quality, and the design of goods, and, in a word, "did under Louis XIV precisely what General Johnson and Secretary Wallace did under President Roosevelt."

> Naturally the system did not work very well. The more the reglements were violated, the more the reglements were multiplied. Lawsuits were endless, smuggling and bootlegging omnipresent, and every so often the government set out to prove that it not only issued regulations but meant them. It felt particularly vehement about printed calicoes; for the French printing industry was backward and the textile producers demanded protection. Certainly the government did its best. "It is estimated," says Heckscher, "that the economic measures taken in this connection cost the lives of some 16,000 people, partly through executions and partly through armed affrays, without reckoning the unknown but certainly much larger number of people who were sent to the galleys, or punished in other ways. On one occasion in Valence, seventy-seven were sentenced to be hanged, fifty-eight were to be broken on the wheel, six hundred thirty-one were sent to the galleys, one was set free and none was pardoned. But even this vigorous action did not help to attain the desired end. Printed calicoes spread more and more widely among all classes of the population, in France as everywhere else."

The Good Society is worth while if only for this chapter. And the same can be said of other chapters which deal with the unfortunate results both of over-done govern-

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ment regulation, and of the discredited policy of laissez faire. These parts of the book are admirable. And they are successful. For they carry out the writer's intention of leaving no doubt in the reader's mind that collectivism is sterile, and that, so far as bringing a higher standard of living is concerned, the totalitarian plan is ineffectual and, in the last analysis, good for nothing in particular but war.

It is from these chapters that the reader draws the conclusion that our form of government, which is democracy, and our method of enterprise, which is capitalism, form together a system which, if protected from privilege and monopoly, as Mr. Lippmann believes it can be protected, is far more effective than collectivism for increasing the general level of well-being.

In an excellent passage in a later chapter, entitled *Gradual Collectivism*, Mr. Lippmann once more is factual rather than philosophic, as he tells how, under the paternal or providential state, groups step forward one by one, each asking for privileges and subsidies, in exchange for votes, and each getting them, until all groups become the grateful and gullible beneficiaries of the government, at their own and each other's expense. Thus the benefit is an illusion and the loss a certainty.

> At the same time the people have been taught by the collectivists to believe that the government can and should make them richer. . . . In a society which has adopted the collectivist view, there is a standing invitation to everyone to devise some method by which the authority of the government can be used to improve his income. . . . The older doctrine was that wealth is increased by labor, enterprise, and thrift, and that the way to a just distribution of income is through the repeal of privileges. It has been overwhelmed by the practical demonstration that some men prosper greatly when the government assists them. So the people have had it fixed in their minds that the state possesses

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a magical power to provide an abundant life. They have come gradually to think that their expectations may be as great as their government is powerful; that the stronger the government, the more certainly it can satisfy their heart's desires. After a while, when the doctrine is completely dominant in the popular mind, a point is reached where men cease to feel that there is any vital connection between production and consumption, between work and wealth. They believe instead that the vital connection is between wealth and the power of the state. It is no longer labor, but the law, the force of the state, the might of the government, that is looked upon as the source of material well-being.

The belief in this miracle is due to an optical illusion. The power of the state, as such, produces nothing: it can only redistribute that which has been produced.

The attempt to universalize privileges, to create privileges for everyone, puts the stamp of official approval on everyone's expectation that the state can ensure his prosperity. At the same time, the measures of the collectivist policy, tariffs, bounties, fixed wages, fixed prices, guaranteed incomes, and the like, have the general effect of enhancing the real costs of production, of reducing the real efficiency of capital and labor, of subsidizing the high-cost producer at the expense of the low-cost. Thus, on the one hand, the state raises the people's expectations, and, on the other hand, it reduces their productivity.

The foregoing, as it seems to me, is well reasoned and well stated. And it has the virtue of being accurately descriptive of what is taking place at this moment, when almost everyone but the consumer and the industrial producer is cared for by the government, the general impression being that the government is paying the bill with taxes taken from the rich. Unfortunately the contribution of the rich and of the well-to-do is comparatively small and almost the entire fund comes from invisible consumption taxes levied on the poor. And what is more, the government only turns over to the favored groups a

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part of what it collects. For a large percentage goes to sustain the huge and wasteful bureaucracy which acts as the distributing agent. The government, in this respect, is like an ill-run and over-manned charitable institution, where the overhead eats up a great part of the income.

Many Americans, who deny allegiance to Marx while they preach the essentials of his dogma, regard depressions as proof of the unsoundness of capitalism and democracy. To this indictment Mr. Lippmann makes no answer. And here, in spite of its many virtues, *The Good Society* is disappointing, especially as in its four hundred pages it deals with almost every conceivable subject from the Rock of Ages to how to sail a boat or build a wickiup. So, since Mr. Lippmann neglects Mr. Marx' fearsome theory of the "Recurring Crisis," let us take a look at it briefly on our own account.

Marx' number one indictment of the existing order, runs somewhat as follows:

In modern industrial society, with its drive toward large scale organization, competition is bound to yield to monopoly and finally be replaced by it. For monopoly is probably the quickest and easiest way to make money that has so far been invented by human beings.

And the indictment continues: It is the nature of monopoly to exploit labor and rob the consumer, and to concentrate wealth at one end of the social scale and misery at the other. And, so say the Marxians, the outcome is an inevitable destruction of mass buying power which, in turn, cuts down consumption and brings on a crisis in the form of industrial collapse. Then comes a readjustment and a temporary recovery, which is followed by another crisis. And the process repeats itself with increasing severity.

Marx believed that these periodic cataclysms are in-

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herent in capitalism, and that they will plunge the masses into such depths of misery and despair that they will finally save themselves by a glorious proletarian revolution. This is the doctrine of Marxian revolutionists. Socialists of the gradualist school, however, hope the revolution and its horrors may be avoided if collectivism, or centrally managed economy, intervenes to save the day.

While, as I have said, Mr. Lippmann does not go into Marx' theory of recurring crises and their final outcome, he does emphatically deny that monopoly, with its price fixing and restraint of trade, is an inevitable tendency of capitalism. He believes, on the contrary, that monopoly can and must be prevented, though he does not say much about the method of prevention.

> An indispensable principle of liberal policy is to outlaw monopoly and the unfair trade practices which lead to monopoly. There is a rather general impression that all business tends towards a condition of monopoly, and that may be true in a society which is drifting without a clear conception of the nature of its own economy. But once men take seriously the idea that they are committed to a mode of production which can be regulated only in free markets, they will re-examine the laws under which monopoly flourishes. They will find, I am convinced, that few effective monopolies have ever been organized and that none can long endure except where there is a legal privilege. It may be a franchise, or the exclusive possession of a limited natural product, or a patent, or a tariff, or simply an exploitation of the corporate device. But if monopoly depends upon a privilege that the law concedes, then monopoly can be destroyed and prevented by changing the law.

On the whole, so far as it goes, this is a good statement of the monopoly question. But it is not a full statement, nor is it wholly accurate. For many of the privileges which sustain monopoly are illegal. For instance, the discrimination in favor of large shippers which is practiced by rail-

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roads, pipe lines, and other common carriers, is illegal under federal statutes such as the Hepburn law of 1906, and under most of the state constitutions. And for the very reason that it is illegal, it can be attacked the more easily.

The socialists, however — and this is true of many New Dealers — once having accepted Marx' conclusion that, aside from revolution, society can do nothing to save itself from the inherent tendency toward monopoly, exploitation, and depressions of growing violence — cling to this conclusion as an everlasting truth which Marx gave to the world, very much as Moses presented his people with the Ten Commandments.

And, what is more, since that historic utterance, the collectivists have become, intellectually speaking, a sort of privileged class. For, having received from their bearded prophet his unchanging truth, they are absolved, fundamentalists as they are, from the duty of standing on their own feet and thinking things out for themselves. Indeed, the pious Marxian, like his little brother the New Dealer, can happily close his eyes and ears to all economic or political developments since 1848. And, when confronted with a proposal to combat monopoly and clean up a plague spot, or an alleged plague spot of the world in which he lives, he is content to sit in his chair and, parrot-like, repeat his cliches, "Unavoidable Trends," "Inherent Tendencies," "Inescapable Destiny." "Nothing can be done till we end the Vicious System."

As a matter of fact the information that has been collected in this country on the subject of industrial monopoly is both important and interesting. It is contained in the minutes and reports of industrial commissions and committees of Congress, which have examined thousands

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of witnesses and analyzed, generally with a surprising degree of ability and sincerity, every phase of the monopoly question.

These documents, it is true, are not what can be called summer reading. But they are essential reading for people who want to understand economics. And in their light we find, in the case of steel, oil, beef packing, coal, and most of the great controlled industries, that the building of monopoly power has followed the same definite principles and technique.

And we also find that monopoly — which is the power to destroy competition and raise prices — is never gained through efficiency, and rarely through mere size. It is gained when one group in an industry, generally a strong group, gets control of some essential industrial factor, like raw material, or transportation, or a patented process which the other producers in the same industry must use in order to do business.

The two great industrial combinations, which demonstrate the monopoly technique most clearly, are perhaps the Steel corporation and the Standard Oil company. The Steel corporation secured its monopoly power first, by controlling the ore hauling roads, a control which gave it a transportation advantage, i.e., a saving of several dollars a ton over the independents. And second, by purchase and lease, it took possession of the principal high-grade ore deposits of the continent.

In addition, there is another advantage, and an important one. For many of the rail systems, which are large buyers of steel, are partly owned or controlled by the interests which control the Corporation. And this means an advantage in marketing its goods as well as in delivering them.

In the so-called oil trust, organized thirty years before

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the steel trust, the technique of monopoly was the same. The Standard took control of rail transportation and later of the pipe lines. Even today the Standard and a few big companies own the principal pipe lines. They carry their own oil, through their own pipes, at cost, just as the Steel corporation carries its ore at cost. And they make a large profit in moving other people's oil.

Again these pipe line companies devise unfair regulations for the acceptance and storage of oil, which put the "independents" at a further disadvantage. For years the pipe line companies have made an average net profit on their investment of around twenty-five per cent. And in good times the ore hauling roads of the Steel corporation have netted an even higher profit.

The effect of such advantages, or, as Mr. Lippmann calls them, privileges, is that the independent finds himself in a dangerous position. For he is well aware that, if he competes actively with the trust or undersells the price fixed by it, it can retaliate by cutting prices lower still. And, since the trust has a transportation or other "differential" in its favor, it can sell down to a point which will seriously embarass the independent, or even drive him to the wall.

Says the Interstate Commerce commission: "In any industry, whoever controls the avenues of transportation of either the raw material or the finished product can speedily drive all competitors out of existence."

But the suggested approach to the monopoly problem — that of destroying monopoly power by separating the monopolist from his privilege — is anathema to the collectivist. In fact any approach is anathema, because it invites him to do what he has never done and does not want to do, i.e., examine economic questions in a spirit of realism instead of romance. It would weaken his faith in

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the holy doctrine that society cannot adjust itself and meet difficult situations except through the purgatory of class war. And worst of all, it would reflect on the omniscience of Mr. Marx, that grumpy philosopher whose chief joy was to sit in his study, write death certificates for christianity and capitalism, and extol class hatred and "inherent tendencies."

Some years ago, Dr. S. M. Crothers, a more genial philosopher than Mr. Marx, announced that there is one tendency common to all tendencies. It is the tendency to develop counter-tendencies.

> There is, for example, a tendency on the part of the gypsy-moth caterpillar to destroy utterly the forests of the United States. But were I addressing a thoughtful company of these caterpillars I should urge them to look upon their own future with modest self-distrust. However well their program looks upon paper, it cannot be carried out without opposition. Long before the last tree has been vanquished, the last of the gypsy-moths may be fighting for its life against the enemies it has made.

Another error in the collectivist's economic diagnosis, to which Mr. Lippmann pays little attention — and it is an error quite commonly found outside the collectivist camp — is the belief that monopoly, and the loss of mass buying power, is not merely a factor, but the main factor in bringing on depressions. It is true that it is a factor. But compared with money and credit inflation it is, comparatively speaking, a minor one. In the 1929 collapse, for example, the reckless and almost insane manipulation of credit was the chief and proximate cause.

In the years immediately preceding this particular depression, the bankers, with the coöperation of two Republican administrations, to wit, those of President Coolidge and President Hoover, encouraged borrowing until it became almost a cardinal virtue. And at the same

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time they loosed on the country an enormous and unneeded stream of credit.

No doubt these bankers and the financial advisors of the government honestly believed that the bull movement following the World War — every great war is followed by a boom because, in war time, the energies of a nation are devoted to war needs and the production of things needed for peace is neglected — would go on indefinitely. And it must be remembered that financiers and governments made the same error of over-optimism all over the world.

Be that as it may, in the pre-crash period the loaning agencies, egged on by the President and the Treasury, encouraged borrowing, almost forcing loans upon people whether they wanted them or not. And a psychological condition was induced in which farmers borrowed and bought land, not only to cultivate, but to hold for higher prices. Business men borrowed and built more factories. Real estate operators borrowed, increased their holdings, and ran up unneeded buildings of every kind. Merchants borrowed, leased larger quarters, ordered more goods, and hired more help. And the general public, sucked into the whirlpool by suggestion and easy money, joined in a prolonged debauch of gambling. In its essentials, the boom of 1929 was merely a glorified Florida boom. It was nourished by the same food, frantic optimism and unlimited credit. And it followed the same tragic path to the end.

When at length the government and the financiers realized that the expansion had gone to a point where earnings were insufficient to pay taxes, interest and overhead, it was too late. Consumption and production were already declining, and had been for a year. Merchants could not pay their rent, so they discharged clerks, and

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reduced their orders for goods. Factories reduced their production and laid off men. Mortgagors failed to meet their obligations and the banks refused to renew loans and foreclosed. And presently vicious circles, multiplying by the thousands, were carrying the nation into the abyss.

Meanwhile the farmers, who had not shared in the general prosperity, partly because England kept the price of gold down in order to obtain our farm products at a low price, sold their land, wherever they could sell. They laid off hands. And they stopped buying feed and machinery, and merchandise from the mail order houses.

And to this outline of the depression, and the reasons for it, may be added one rare and, so far as I know, unparalleled factor. In ordinary times the bull and the bear stock transactions tend to cancel each other's effect on the market, most transactions being, in fact, between bulls who think the market is going up and bears who think it is going down. And there results a needed steadying force. But, when, in the autumn of 1929, call money rates rose to an almost fabulous height, the bears, who had prudently sold out and withdrawn their money from the street and were waiting to buy again at lower prices, were tempted by the attractive call money rates. Whereupon they loaned their money to bulls who used it in expanding their transactions. So that, from then on, the bull money and the bear money were, for once, on the same side. And stocks rose higher still and hastened the inevitable collapse.

In a word, it was not capitalism that brought the collapse of 1929. Neither was it Mr. Marx' "inherent tendencies." It was our failure to keep capitalism properly serviced, and to provide a common sense control over credit, gold, and the price level. As most of the world has

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already come to see, there is one thing that *does* require collective, or federal, regulation in a modern state. It is money and credit. The power to regulate money and credit is essentially a sovereign power. Like the power to make laws, it belongs to the representatives of the people. For it is so great a power, and so vitally important, that it should not be entrusted to any private group or any one man — especially not to a politician.

Since the tragic events of 1929, recognizing the need for regulated money and credit, Congress, by the Banking act of 1935, has provided strong agencies of control. But, unwisely following the trend of the last few years, it has placed this control beyond its own reach and in the hands of the Chief Executive. In other words, in the manner of money and credit, we have followed the collectivist pattern which Mr. Lippmann deplores. In the Banking act we took a long step toward executive autocracy.

Somehow, in discussing depressions and the maladjustments that lead to them, we seem to have drifted fairly far from Mr. Lippmann and his *Good Society*. We seem to be writing about the things which Mr. Lippmann did not say. But perhaps extenuation may be found in the fact that there are certain very important things which liberals must not only discuss, but decide and act on, if liberalism is to hold out against the wreckful siege of battering days through which it is passing.

To thousands, perhaps millions of people, the chief objection to our present system is that it has permitted the terrific human tragedies known as depressions. And their main excuse for veering toward collectivism is that it pretends to be able to cope authoritatively with depressions, as with everything else. It would seem, therefore, that a discussion of the causes of depressions,

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whether they are monopolies or credit expansion, or whatever they may be, is germane to the subject of liberalism and *The Good Society*.

In the second half of the book, when Mr. Lippmann turns his attention from collectivism to liberalism, he is, on the whole, less successful than in the first. Though he makes a fairly good analysis of liberalism's faults and virtues, he offers little by way of a constructive program. Indeed he is disinclined to set much store by programs. "The Good Society," he says, "has no architectural design. There are no blueprints. There is no mold in which human life is to be shaped."

Rather he elects to put his trust in a return to a clearer understanding of human rights. For these he pleads, as well as for a recognition of "the higher law" by which these rights may be sustained.

> The denial that men may be arbitrary in human transactions *is* the higher law. . . . That is the spiritual essence without which the letter of the law is nothing but the formal trappings of vested rights or the ceremonial disguise of caprice and willfulness.

Again, in a section entitled *Man the Inviolable*, he makes the philosophy of liberalism depend on, or rather rest on, a more fundamental consideration, namely the Golden Rule. But he holds that the Golden Rule is itself invalid unless men recognize that in other men there is an inalienable and autonomous essence.

> The rule is meaningless where that recognition is absent. It can be preached from all the pulpits of the world and it will be without effect unless men acknowledge that there is an inalienable essence in all other men. . . .
> For in the recognition that there is in each man a final essence — that is to say, an immortal soul — which only God can judge, a limit was set upon the dominion of men over men. The preroga-

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> tives of supremacy were radically undermined. The inviolability of the human person was declared.
> Towards this conviction men have fought their way in the long ascent out of the morass of barbarism. Upon this rock they have built the rude foundations of the Good Society.

I must confess that I found this part of the book, though eloquent and indeed a little too eloquent, rather heavy going, perhaps because I am less interested than I ought to be in discovering philosophic or religious reasons for ideas which the ordinary experience of life seems to me to confirm. No doubt it is pleasant to hear from Mr. Lippmann's lips that God is still in the heavens and not in the Kremlin or the White House, and that the Golden Rule, untarnished by time, is just as good as ever. Yet his assertion that the Golden Rule's validity rests on the eternal truth that Man the Inviolable belongs to himself, and not to somebody else, does not seem to cover the whole ground. For something might be said to the effect that the G. R. has been found, in actual trial, to be a good design for living.

When Mr. Lippmann philosophizes, as he does too much for my taste, especially in the concluding chapter of the book, *On This Rock*, he is apt to be ponderous. He, so to speak, takes his providential pen in hand, and traces cloudy symbols of a high romance, the romance of the mind. Undoubtedly Mr. Lippmann likes ideas; he revels in them. Yet he is not too discriminating in sorting and arranging them. And he uses them — old or new, good, bad or indifferent — with the majestic enjoyment of a sacred elephant showering itself with the water of the Ganges.

In the same chapter, and a previous one, Mr. Lippmann takes a crack, quite justly I think, at the high priests of scientifically induced scarcity, Stuart Chase,

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George Soule, Secretary Wallace and others. And at this point I looked for, but did not find, an appraisal of providential statesmen of the type of that great liberal, once Senator now Supreme Court Justice, Hugo Black. I refer to those men high in the councils of the White House who, with a passionate tenderness for labor, fight for better conditions of employment, and yet seem to have little or no concern about employment itself. Consequently, with the utmost enthusiasm, they dish up bills, like the Black-Connery bill, which, if passed as drafted or even as later amended, would slow industry down in large sections of the country, and disemploy enormous numbers of people.

It is a hopeful sign that labor itself has begun to oppose this kind of short-sighted lawmaking, which is not only against its long range interest, but too obviously designed as a bid for its support. Sometimes when I hear the President and his left wing comrades promising the moon to labor, plus an abundant life with less work, more pay, and a foot pressed firmly on the neck of industry, I wonder whether they are consciously capitalizing labor's credulity. And, if psycho-analyzed by a frank practitioner, would they find that they were less interested in labor than in its vote?

Surely it must be clear to them that, even if labor were organized one hundred per cent, and given every conceivable protection that can be put in laws, even then the wage earner's only real chance for a steady job with good wages — and for labor this is the abundant life — would be good business, high production and a corresponding demand for work.

Somewhere in the book I had hoped also to find kind words for the men, in or out of politics, who have long been fighting, as Mr. Lippmann is now fighting, for

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liberalism — men who have spent their strength and risked their careers defending democracy, at a time when Mr. Lippmann was saying that to believe in democracy was to believe in the impossible, and that democracy serves to produce "a bewildered public and a mass of insufficiently trained officials." Somehow or other, in reading *The Good Society*, one gains the impression that, in North America at least, the fight for liberalism has been waged by Mr. Lippmann all alone.

Yet, if *The Good Society* has its faults, it also has its excellencies. There is much in it that is good, and much that is informative. And a defense of liberalism is timely at this juncture, when so many people, who do not understand the principles or mechanics of our politico-economic system, are hopelessly confused, and are turning to old and ugly tyrannies camouflaged with a new coat of paint. I hope *The Good Society* will be widely read, for a good deal of it is written with wisdom, and some of it, mainly in the first half, with mastery. I hope too that the philosophical preachments will be overlooked by those who do not care for them, and that the stronger and clearer passages will be considered separately and on their own merits, which are often high.

And I wish that at the end, and out of the mass of his material, Mr. Lippmann had set down the high points of his discussions, and, more than that, indicated the deductions which might fairly be drawn from them. And, since he has not done that, I would like to do it in my own way, somewhat arbitrarily, or providentially if you please, and including some things which, as it seems to me, ought to be, but are not in the book.

1. Managed economy will prove undesirable. It should be abandoned. It requires a degree of discipline and control which must turn it to fascism. It is restrictive and sterile. It devitalizes

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production and reduces the incentive for creating wealth and the expansion and differentiation of product which alone can raise the standard of living and keep labor employed.

2. Managed economy, because it is economically impotent and conducive to under-production, tyranny and unhappiness, leads to militarism and war.

3. A government cannot effectively produce wealth. By wealth we mean the goods and services people need. Governments are not properly organized for industry. But, by statutes of wide and general application, governments can lay down and enforce the rules which shall govern the industrial game. And, when this has been done, if a government is wise and mindful of its people's good, it will make itself as scarce as possible.

4. Labor and other groups cannot effectively be protected by subsidies and government-given privileges. These paralyze production and impoverish all classes.

5. Labor should be unionized for its own sake, and for industry's sake, as well. And there should be responsible bargaining on both sides. But labor's main reliance for good wages and conditions of employment, and for employment itself, is the vitality and resourcefulness of industry conducted for profit.

6. Machine industry, while it brings temporary unemployment, has the long range effect of increasing employment, provided monopoly does not intervene to raise prices and reduce consumption. Dislocation of labor, on account of technological advance, is a problem that can be taken care of by private and public insurance and by work on government projects.

7. Monopoly can be prevented. And the line of attack should be that of separating the monopolist from the privilege, or privileges which give him his power to destroy competition and fix prices.

8. It is probable that good monetary control can greatly reduce the chance of major depressions, if not prevent them. The flow

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of money and credit should be controlled centrally. But the agencies of control should be responsible to Congress and not to the President. This point, like some of the ones I have mentioned, Mr. Lippmann adumbrates but does not actually treat.

9. A government controlled by the discretion of a ruler, or a group, is probably the ugliest and most costly phenomenon to be found in society. On the other hand, a government democratically controlled, and functioning through common council and law, is the highest and most hopeful achievement of man.

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One Southern View-point

JULIA PETERKIN

ONE of the most striking things about the history of literature in these United States was the persistent refusal of writers to tell of the life that lay naked before their eyes. Whatever was wrong with human beings in their relationships with each other might be printed in newspapers without giving offense; accounts of poverty and crime, of cruelties and stupidities and the misery resulting from them might appear daily in the news and be discussed, deplored, but for a writer of fiction to tell of these same misfortunes and meannesses, to present as real the traits and adversities that maim and shatter mankind, was considered base, detestable. Nobody might hint that the good as well as the wicked were subject to unfriendly forces in the universe. Life had to be shown as lovely and inviting; goodness must always overcome evil; wickedness must be punished with defeat; truth crushed to earth must always rise again.

Distinguished writers in Europe might present life as their own eyes saw it and be hailed in their own countries, recognized as important here. They might demonstrate that the artist must be free to present actual facts whether those facts were beautiful or revolting, that he must omit no shocking detail needed to complete the picture he reported or the character he wished to reveal. But this freedom was denied to American writers although as early as 1837 Emerson had declared that "The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life are the topics of the time." Until the last few decades

Children of Strangers. By Lyle Saxon. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.

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anything that approached realism in literature whether it concerned Negroes or whites was regarded as offensive. Writers were not only subject to the tyranny of taste common to American readers but to the dictatorship and oppression of the assertions and opinions of the critics who in large measure shaped that taste.

It is hard to understand why writers submitted to this influence with such docility. But the artist forever lives within the currents of thought which direct the minds of his time. His ideas are inescapably influenced by the ideas which surround him. Consequently, whatever writing was done dealt with events and characters existing only in the imagination of the writer. Reality was ignored.

The south had never been enchained by Puritanism. The southern writer did not deny what was, for the sake of his soul's salvation. But, when he set out to write, he shut his eyes to what was because it failed to correspond to the pattern of life which he had been taught to regard as fitting for a superior people. And the south did feel superior. Even after its lack of success in the Civil war, it continued to feel superior. Life had been harsh ever since that war. After half a hundred years, the results of the destruction wrought by it were visible everywhere. Evidences of the poverty and stupidity of human beings had to be faced every day. Sorrow, disappointment, hopelessness were abundant enough to depress and sadden people whether they read books or not.

Those who are cold instinctively seek the sunshine; only the warm can enjoy the coolness of shadows. And so, it was not unnatural that southern writers concerned themselves with accounts of beauty and bravery and abundance. Their books had no roots in actual life. The stark truth of the present had to be faced and en-

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dured with as much patience as possible, but with one accord, southern people turned their faces toward the past when life had been a very different experience.

Since the south's failure was bound up with slavery, it was natural to defend it, since defending it also defended themselves. Its writers therefore dwelt on the advantages of slavery, on the kindness of slave-owners, the loyalty and affection of slaves. They looked at the past so persistently and with such respect and reverence that it was inescapably magnified. There seemed to be no suspicion at all that the south might have been decadent before the war swept away its material wealth. Nobody seemed to realize that easy living had lessened the south's vitality, that if the war had never come, if the slaves had never been freed, if the slave owners and their children had continued to live in affluence, luxury, the sheer lack of a goal to be attained through struggle would have caused the springs of their life to dry up and they would have dwindled into nothingness.

They saw only that the glorious past was over, the present bitter and the future dreaded. But the past was bright and there all eyes were fixed. Southern writers delighted in telling of its perfection. Those who presented scenes from the present made no reference to its ugliness. Instead, they told how bright the sun shone in southern skies, how sweetly the mocking birds sang as young lovers gently murmured graceful and tender words on wide verandas, and rich harmonies of Negro voices drifted in from the Quarter cabins far across the wide cotton fields.

Those whose lives were meager were stirred by accounts of their forebears who had actually achieved a place in life when all desires were realized, who had achieved a civilization toward which America had aimed ever since the first settler arrived from overseas. Life had

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become ideal in a generous land. The early dream of perfection had come to pass. The time for complete enjoyment had come. Then the war had swept it all away. Lincoln had set the slaves free. Sherman had burned the towns and destroyed the countryside. Everything worth preserving was gone.

If any book telling the actual truth about any phase of life in the south had been published before the World war, the chances are that the book and its author would have been denounced instead of meeting with praise and approval. Until then, conventions in writing were considerably more binding than any obligation to present life as it appeared to the eyes of the writer. A disregard for these conventions was met with indignation. Failure to observe the accepted cliches in writing about any individual or group was punished, but especially was this true in regard to writing about Negroes.

Negroes were placed in one class labeled "colored," and endowed with definite traits and characteristics. Other groups, for example, Jews, Irishmen, Scotchmen, southerners, were similarly endowed according to accepted standards, but none of these were misrepresented so persistently as the Negroes.

A story about any Negro, to be welcomed by the reading public or the critics who shaped the tastes of that public, had to fit one of the conventional molds. The most popular one showed loyal, grateful slaves, or ex-slaves who were devoted to the families of their present owners and eager to sacrifice themselves for their white friends. Another prized portrayal presented the Negro characters as amiable, care-free comic figures, full of easy laughter and always ready with a gay song or nimble dance step. A third well-known presentation showed the Negro as a drinking, gambling, worthless creature who

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was such a menace to white civilization that he spent most of his days on the chain-gang until he was finally lynched by a mob of white citizens resolved to protect white society from injury at his hands.

These patterns of Negro conduct were emphasized in literary productions so persistently that they were accepted as authentic. And not until comparatively recent years have our dark-skinned neighbors been treated as individuals, as human beings whose position in the social scale is complicated by problems and difficulties not found in the lives of their white contemporaries.

Nobody seems to have kept in mind the fact that many of the forefathers of Negroes living here today were brought from Africa several centuries ago, and were as much immigrants, even if unwilling ones, as the white immigrants who came of their own accord to seek religious and civil freedom. The word "slave" was always repugnant to the south. In speaking of their slaves, the owner preferred to call them "hands," or "servants." In those early slave-trading days, Negroes could not be grouped together and labeled, for every slave owner and slave trader knew that representatives of different African tribes were as unlike each other in physique, character, codes of conduct as a white immigrant from Sweden might differ from one who came from Spain. People dealing in merchandise need to know the value, the quality of that merchandise. And since these Negroes were merchandise, the New England slave traders were as aware of their difference in value, which meant their difference in excellence, as the southern slave buyers were. Some of the tribes were known to be gentle, docile, others fierce and intractable; some were healthy and intelligent, others malarial, despondent and of low mentality.

White immigrants were their own masters and free to

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work out their own destinies. They were not regarded with any eye to their excellencies or shortcomings. But these black immigrants, for they were in truth immigrants, just as much as were the whites who crossed the seas and discarded their language and traditions for those of this land, were articles of commerce. On their worth depended the material success of their white owners. The best ones were bought by those who could afford to pay the best prices. Southerners took as much pride in the ownership of fine slaves as of fine horses.

To this day, stories are told in the south but never written about the courage and arrogance of the helpless blacks who were put up on the slave blocks to be auctioned off. Pride in their filed teeth or their tattoed faces and bodies which to them meant proof of superiority in their old homes made no difference here. They were nothing more nor less than property.

None of these stories is more poignant than the letter one of the governors of the Leeward Islands wrote to the English board of trade concerning a tribe from the Gold coast of Africa, many of whose members were brought into the south and sold. This letter quoted by DuBose Heyward in an essay about the Negro in the Low country is as follows:

> The Corramantees are not only the best and most faithful of all our slaves, but are really all born heroes. There is a difference between them and all other Negroes beyond which it is impossible for your Lordships to conceive. There was never a coward or raskal of that nation. Intrepid to the last degree, not a man of them but will stand to be cut to pieces without a sigh or a groan, grateful and obedient to a kind master, but implacably revengeful when ill-treated. My father, who had studied the genius and temper of all kinds of Negroes forty-five years with a very nice observation, would say no man deserved a Corramantee that would not treat him like a friend rather than a slave.

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When the slaves were freed, tribal differences were quickly forgotten in this melting pot of America. Negroes were no longer property, nor were they citizens with political rights. They far outnumbered the whites in the south but they had no part in government. They were neither for nor against nations or parties. They had no means of contrasting civilizations. They had no blind devotion to any institution, and none of that possession called patriotism. But time has proven that in the south they have had enormous influence on life and living and nowhere else have they so definitely influenced political opinion. Even in the south it has been forgotten that before the slaves were ever freed, many Negroes were not slaves at all. The Civil war found no less than half a million of them already free.

Some of these were born free, others had been given freedom by their owners, still others who were skilled workmen had been hired out by their owners who paid them a portion of their earnings and enabled them to buy their freedom. A large number of these dark-skinned freemen were the progeny of white planters and black slaves. It was not unusual for them to be wealthy and to own both land and slaves. Some of them had large, handsome, comfortable houses, and rich acres of land that grew cotton, profitable crops of rice, cotton, sugar-cane, tobacco, that enabled them to live in much the same luxurious manner as their white neighbors.

No matter where any of this strange land-owning, slave-holding caste were found in the south they held themselves aloof from their black neighbors and were barred from association with the whites. The consequence was that they became groups to themselves, no matter where they lived. Nobody cared who they were or how they originated so long as they did not interfere with the

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whites around them. Undoubtedly, the whites, as a rule, professed to have a prejudice against all of them, since it was feared, and with reason, that they might cause insurrections among the slaves, or become otherwise troublesome. And although many of them were industrious, honest, good neighbors, some of the states forbade them to carry arms, to bear witness against a white person, to learn to read and write, to presume to conceive themselves equal to the whites but on the contrary, to "Yield to them on every occasion."

The Civil War left these property owning people impoverished, the same as the whites. And like the whites, some of the groups clung to their pride in ancestry, held fast to their old traditions and strove to keep possession of their lands.

Lyle Saxon's *Children of Strangers* presents the tragedy of all these people in the story of one of them, Famie, a beautiful young quadroon girl, who sold everything she had inherited to give her son, whose father was white, a chance in the world. Her people regarded her as a traitor and in their indignation and resentment, they punished her mercilessly. She had no place in the white world, and when ostracized by her own people she became a pitiful outcast who was finally received and welcomed by the kindly blacks whom she had been taught to scorn.

Doubtless there have been many women in the south whose situations have been as tragic as Famie's. And not all of them have been Negroes. In scores of white families, individual members have fared as badly as she did. But until recent years no writer thought of recounting the tragedies that haunted the lives of bond-servants and their descendants or of the progeny of poverty stricken none-slave-owners of past years. Since slave-owners were supposed to be "aristocrats" and superior, and non-slave-

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owners regarded as inferior even by the slaves, a large majority of southern people, after the slaves were set free, professed to having owned and loved their many "Servants;" they were invariably brought up by devoted Mammy's. The truth is that only twenty-three hundred families owned as many as one hundred slaves in the whole south.

Be that as it may, it is interesting to consider what would have happened to Lyle Saxon's book and to himself if he had written it a few decades ago instead of today. The chances are that it would have been roundly denounced and the author punished as a traitor to his social group. Not because his book lacks charm or that the story fails to be told with skill; not even because it fails to conform to one of the patterns regarded as proper for the presentation of a member of the colored race. But because he dares to tell the truth and to make it clear that life in the south is not always polite and elegant. For it was never doubted a few decades ago that aristocracy was a matter of inheritance, that superiority was passed on from parents to children, that "common" blood was a handicap too great ever to be entirely overcome. And to have intimated that lack of nourishing food or infection by malaria or hook-worm might possibly have contributed to the number of white trash, poor whites, in the south would have been thought ridiculous. And to have said that the aristocrats themselves might ever become inferior because of these very menaces, would have been considered actually wicked.

But times have changed during the years that have followed the World War. Not only has living been transformed by inventions, discoveries, the need for slaves destroyed by technology, but the whole background of southern people has shifted, socially, economically, in-

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tellectually. Lyle Saxon's accounts of Negroes give pleasure to the very people whose parents could not abide Cable's. Telling the truth offended in Cable's day.

It is as if the World War opened men's eyes, ears, minds. The younger generation in the south seemed suddenly to see that in order to survive, it must liberate itself from the past. The opinions of the preceding generation were discarded, new opinion formed. Readers and writers began to face harsh facts without blinking, and resolved to quit exaggerating and pretending. After years of silence about the cruelties and stupidities of mankind, the ignorance, hatred, greed that are responsible for so much misery are fearlessly portrayed and exposed. And today, the south proudly boasts that it no longer tolerates sentimentality in literature, that writers need no longer sweeten and soften their accounts of human life, that it now understands why reality may have both beauty and romance.

But while we rejoice in our present freedom from formulas, we may as well keep in mind that this freedom may not be permanent. We must not forget that fashions will continue to change, in writing as in clothes and manners. Suppose for example that crime continues to increase, that unannounced wars multiply, that life becomes actually deformed. What will the writer do? Will he undertake to tell the truth about what he sees, and by exposing it, endeavor to destroy evil? Or will he once more create illusions by which our self-esteem may be preserved and our pride, as human beings, cherished. Who can answer these questions with confidence?

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Society with a Capital "S"

LLOYD MORRIS

THE CURRENT temper of the American mind adds a touch of irony to publication of the first comprehensive history of American "society." As perhaps only twice before in our past, the nation seems now to be fumbling after new social values which, if grasped and realized, may deprive the term in its restricted sense of any but an historical significance. Scant comfort awaits the timid conservative in Mr. Wecter's chronicle of social aspiration during three centuries. But for dogmatists of radical persuasion his five hundred pages should prove an equally chastening experience. They illuminate all too clearly the steps by which, under any system, man's wistful ambition for personal distinction degenerates into mere snobbery.

To shed this illumination is not, of course, Mr. Wecter's purpose. He is an historian, not a moralist, and the effect is an incidental one. But that it actually occurs is remarkable. For, free to adopt any criteria of judgment in respect to his materials, Mr. Wecter has performed the difficult feat of choosing nearly all and consistently maintaining none. At times you find him assuming Henry James's urbane and fastidious condescension to the provincialism of our fashionable world. At times he seems to indulge in the dialectical snobbishness of our more recent proletarian novelists. And now and again he falls willing victim to the very pretensions which it is his task to analyze. The result of this oscillation between possible points of view is as exciting, if sometimes as implausible, as a ride on a roller-coaster. Here, garnered

Saga of American Society. By Dixon Wecter. Scribner's. $4.00.

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and documented with painstaking scholarship, is all the really diverting gossip which three hundred years of American social life have succeeded in preserving. As an historian, it is Mr. Wecter's happy fortune to combine the bounce of a Walter Winchell with the meticulous inclusiveness of a modern Saint Simon. In consequence, his volume is likely to become a treasure trove for all future American novelists who choose to write about the American past, and a source of extreme discomfort to such other Americans as trace their descent further than three generations.

Rather disarmingly, Mr. Wecter founds his labors upon Amiel's suggestion that the splendor of "society" is a form of poetry, a dream which the fortunate attempt to live out and the disadvantaged enviously admire. This, with some observations of Matthew Arnold and others on the educative values of an aristocracy to a raw nation, is sufficient to warm up an innate nostalgia for "gentle manners, beautiful speech, and the connoisseurship of gracious living." The survival, among our aristocracy, of these indisputable excellences should, in Mr. Wecter's opinion, preserve them from destruction by an enraged proletariat. Their destruction, he assures us, would do little good and much irreparable harm; it would distribute a few more dollars per capita, and convert steam yachts into proletarian picnic boats, but annihilate, along with the aristocracy, the excellences so admired by Mr. Wecter.

Reconciling ourselves to this pessimistic hypothesis with such fortitude as we can summon, we press on for further information about these magnificent exemplars of the good life. But Mr. Wecter is disappointingly coy about them. They exist, he assures us. We have our rare old vintage aristocrats; they are the sheet anchor of our

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social ark; they represent Pure Being, the *ens reale* of St. Thomas Aquinas. And he describes them, once for all, in an anecdote. "Some years ago a great lady of Charleston was being regaled by her grandchildren concerning the sights they had seen in Paris. They dwelt in particular upon their visit to the Louvre, and the knot of people who were always found in rapt contemplation before Whistler's *Mother*. The old lady listened attentively, and when they paused for breath she inquired with all imaginable sweetness, 'But why? After all, she was only a MacNeill of North Carolina.'"

If Mr. Wecter does not otherwise identify those who among us represent Pure Being, it is perhaps because that part of him which is not incurably romantic is soundly scholarly. As scholar, following the trail blazed by several earlier historians, he does an excellent job of destroying the myths about the superior social status of the earlier colonists. His laborious research presents statistical summaries and factual portraits demonstrating the prevailingly middle and low-class origins of planter, puritan, and patroon. It is a singular revelation of American touchiness that their descendants, for the most part, take little pride in the sound sturdiness of the tap root. To those who, like Mr. Wecter and Oliver Wendell Holmes, believe that the traditional aristocrat is born not made ("a child's education should begin at least one hundred years before he was born," Dr. Holmes informed an anxious mother) the whole affair of American origins is, even today, slightly disconcerting.

But if aristocracy was involved, it was to be found among the great landholders and, subsequently, among the emergent mercantile class. Until the eighteenth century there was not, as James Truslow Adams remarks, a gentleman of leisure in the whole of North America,

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unless he were a jailbird or a redskin. Slavery, and a second wave of emigration which brought over refugees from Cromwell, established the species in Virginia, and in Carolina. Politics, occasional shady dealings with pirates, and the humbler forms of commerce developed it in New York. Commerce and theology were its chief source in Massachusetts. By the mid-eighteenth century "society," as Mr. Wecter and its own members define it, had been inaugurated along the Atlantic seaboard. A legend was already in the making; so plausible that the Revolution failed to destroy it; so persistent that even today it enriches manufacturers of cigarettes, cosmetics, and similar goods; so persuasive that, in at least one American city, invitations to an annual ball are always sent to certain inmates of the county poor farm, but never to the New York millionaires who have purchased their ancestral homes.

It is curious to reflect — as Mr. Wecter does not — that the authority of "society" as a social organism has, in this country at least, always been based upon the preposterously naïve willingness of the excluded to be victimized. One is struck, over and over again in reading its saga, by the obvious fact that, at any given moment, "society" might have been reduced to impotence or intolerable ennui by the mere refusal of the "outs" to be concerned about their ostracism. For real power, in the past, has inevitably flowed to the economically fortunate and the financially astute, and the citadel has always been forced to capitulate to them. The anxiety and resolution with which they have conducted their siege has made victory seem sweeter, but has meanwhile prolonged the struggle. There has never been a time when the parvenu might not have profited by discovering that to ignore is better tactics than to besiege.

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What admission to the citadel has meant, as outlined by Mr. Wecter's researches, can scarcely ever have seemed precious to any moderately intelligent person. The fruits of victory have included many odd things, but the materials of an enjoyable existence or a good life do not seem to have been among them. The "social" history of New York city during the nineteenth century is for that reason a masterpiece of pure comedy, in which the desired key, once possessed, has unlocked doors opening upon vulgarity, irrelevance, and futile fantasy. Is it possible that people of worldly experience can have willingly submitted to the pompous absurdities of Ward McAllister, the adolescent prankishness of Harry Lehr, or the dull dominion of Mrs. Astor? Reading Mr. Wecter's account of the vagaries of that gilded age which came to an end only with the Great War, one remembers with an added pleasure the long series of novels in which Mrs. Wharton exposed the emptiness of a venerated ark.

One of the basic reasons for the moral failure of "society" is, perhaps, the intense individualism encouraged by the nineteenth century's concept of democracy. In colonial and post-Revolutionary days an English concept prevailed, making public service in some form an inescapable obligation of the advantaged classes. This tradition was notably weakened during the ascendancy of Jefferson who, ironically enough, remains one of its most conspicuous exponents, and it met its death with the triumph of Jackson. The subsequent divorce between the life of a presumably cultured aristocracy and the national welfare operated, in conjunction with a series of economic factors by now familiar to most readers, to create a class ignorant of social obligations and without capacity for social ideals. The self-justifications of "society," as Mr. Wecter remarks, are therefore none too impressive.

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> It has bought Old Masters, but fed few living artists. Its tastes in music and opera have been both timid and grandiose, and its patronage of literature has been negligible. Unhappily it forsook politics more than a century ago, though for reasons not wholly unselfish it longs just now to return. With generosity it has sometimes given to charity and education, though it has wasted other great sums in foolish ways. To the wisdom, goodness, and piety of mankind it has afforded at best an erratic and whimsical support. In all these ways American society has shown characteristic short-sightedness. A favored minority which nourishes well the arts and good works gives hostages for its own safety; one which slights them for selfish ends — "conspicuous waste," lavish living and dining, amusement and sport — loses its compass of idealism and invites disaster.

Happily, the history of American society — employing the term rather in its largest than its most restricted sense — would supply the requisite corrective to the panorama opened up by Mr. Wecter's investigations. In that history, the history of "society" would occupy a minor place, and its moral import be obvious. Under any system of organization, it is probable that an advantaged minority would exist in some form, with privileges and perquisites arousing the envy of all those who did not possess them. Humanity's dream has always been to restrict them to the meritorious, and American democracy has perhaps made no worse job of the matter than most other nations. It was never inevitable, it is not inevitable now, that social leadership fall into the hands of the spiritually or mentally inadequate. That, over nearly a century of our history, it appears to have done so is by no means an indictment of the system under which we live. It is merely a rather insignificant illustration of the waste which our resources and our liberty have hitherto enabled us to afford. Perhaps, now that we can no longer afford it, we shall merely relinquish the indulgence.

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Colonial Hero

HERSCHEL BRICKELL

WHEN literary historians get around to writing the story of the second half of the 'thirties they will find themselves faced with the task of explaining the popularity of the novel that reaches backward into the American past for its subject matter.

This trend, the strongest to be observed in our letters at the present moment, since the definite passing of the unsuccessful attempt to impose class-conscious fiction upon a fundamentally unclass-conscious people, is noticeable not only in the phenomenal success of such examples of historical fiction as Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, but also in the minor successes of many novels in the same category.

It is not that the interest in our history is anything new to native fiction. Beginning with Cooper, the frontier adventure, for example, has never altogether ceased to exercise its fascination upon writers and readers. And following Cooper, the unjustly forgotten William Gilmore Simms also went back to the past for his material, which he handled with an approach, at least, to the realistic attitude of the present day.

Even so powerful a naturalist as Frank Norris who lives on by his novels of the contemporary scene, whose social significance links them with the work of our proletarian novelists, planned a long novel on the battle of Gettysburg, which had to wait for MacKinlay Kantor to bring it into being. And several years ago James Boyd gave us the late colonial and early revolutionary periods in his splendid *Drums*, and then the Civil war in *Marching On*.

Northwest Passage. By Kenneth Roberts. Doubleday, Doran. $2.75.

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But the fact that many of our best novelists have never forgotten the riches of our history is of less importance at the moment than that in our own troubled time we should not only have a whole spate of dips into the past, but that they should, whenever they deserve it, find the warmest and most enthusiastic popular favor. Few good historical novels of recent months have gone neglected, although occasionally something as fine as Esther Forbes' *Paradise* finds less than its due, for reasons that are hard to discover.

What explanation will be finally hit upon for the existing situation it is not easy to prophesy. But speculation is not difficult, since observers of literary trends are always able to dig up reasons for anything. I think myself that the present, treated in any large way, defeats most novelists, if not all, because they cannot, no matter how talented they are or what technical devices they may resort to — I am thinking just now of John Dos Passos — bring it into artistic focus and that this may have something to do with the current trend.

In other words, novelists of the present face the grave, not to say insuperable, difficulty of making a transition period add up to something, when nobody knows just what it will finally add up to. The defeat of the idealogical novelist of day before yesterday, who worked under the illusion of imminent revolution, is a case in point, for his communistic sympathies reduced his work to a formula quite as obvious as that of the ordinary boy-gets-girl romance; he merely changed it to boy-gets-Marx, which is considerably less interesting to the mass-mind.

I do not mean by these comments to indicate that the modern scene is not available to the novelist who is willing to narrow his range, and to confine himself to stories about people and universal problems. Many novels of

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this kind are being written, and are by no means negligible, however much they may offend the critics who can see only one use for literature, as propaganda for social and economic change.

Perhaps the time element also has something to do with our interest in the past. We are no longer a young nation, and have lived enough history to provide our novelists with all the material they are likely to need for a good while, and as we approach maturity, we, like individuals, may be making a perfectly natural turn backward toward our origins.

A more obvious explanation still would be that historical novels are escapist in essence, and that in such a period as this readers like to forget their own anxieties in following the sorrows and sufferings of their ancestors, which are exciting, but which move no one to tears because of the consciousness that they have taken place in the far past, and that the people concerned are long since beyond pain. It is not true, however, that a good historical novel is merely a vehicle for an escape from the hard present; it may well be both an emotional experience and a useful guide to the present which is so inevitably linked to the past.

Artistically, the historical novelist has a distinct advantage in that his story assumes its own focus; he knows the end as well as the beginning. He faces the problem of blending the real with the imagined, which is never so simple as it sounds, but at least his pattern is fixed for him beforehand. This is the reason, of course, that tempts the talented writer who feels himself deficient in creative imagination to turn to a recreation of the past, in which research will provide the bricks and mortar, at least, for the final structure, and even the general architectural design.

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The most noteworthy difference between the historical novel of our day and of other periods in this country is its realistic attitude. This may be clearly seen in the recent group of Civil war novels, most of them written by southerners. Compared to the flood of fiction on the same theme that appeared in the 'eighties of the past century, they are less apologetic in tone, and are obviously written under less pressure to make one side of the struggle appear better than it was, or to glorify the ante-bellum civilization beyond its deserts. The romantic tradition still survives here and there, but seems to be dying.

Contemporary historical novelists also have the advantage of far greater technical skill than their predecessors enjoyed, even allowing for the fact that the novel which pleases everybody today may be regarded as hopelessly old-fashioned tomorrow because of the shift in taste from one generation to another. I think it is obvious enough that there are at present many more writers in this country, forgetting the inspired ones, who understand the mechanics of fiction than there have ever been before. This is bound to result in a higher average of excellence no matter which way their talents are turned.

An excellent example of what a hardworking novelist may accomplish by centering his attention upon a limited geographical area and a relatively brief space of time is to be found in the work of Kenneth Roberts, who began his career as a writer of historical fiction, after long experience in magazine writing, some time ahead of the present peak of the fashion, and who has gone on to share in the seemingly insatiable demand of the public for more and more stories of our past, a demand sharpened by Miss Mitchell and such others in her field as Walter Edmonds.

The Maine coast is Mr. Roberts' hunting ground, and thus far his novels, *Arundel*, *Rabble in Arms*, *Captain Cau-*

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tion and *The Lively Lady* have ranged from the early days of the Revolutionary war through the War of 1812. In his highly successful *Northwest Passage*, which has already passed the quarter of a million mark in sales, he pushes backward into the period of the French and Indian wars, but his story still begins and ends at Kittery, and this devotion to a region singularly wealthy in material, gives his work a link with our regional fiction; it is a striking illustration of how much good stuff lies outside the front door of any American novelist who is willing to do the necessary spade-work.

If *Northwest Passage* almost certainly benefited by the time of its appearance, it also has other advantages over Mr. Roberts' fine early books, which while sometimes not altogether original as to plot, never failed to be good reading. The principal one of these is a re-discovery and a full-length presentation of one of the most extraordinary figures in all our colonial history, Major Robert Rogers. Major Rogers was hardly known to fame at all before Mr. Roberts dug him up and brought him to life, making us all recognize in him one of the first of a long line of supermen, sons of the frontier, who now safely belong to American mythology. The Rogers material as it stood furnished the skeleton for a novel of adventure and romance which in its essential plan is much older than prose fiction, and goes all the way back to Odysseus, Jason, and scores of others who wandered far, found dangers and excitements, and proved themselves heroes, whether or not they ever finally attained the goal they set for themselves.

I do not know if Mr. Roberts' distinctly realistic handling of the British end of his stories has affected their popularity in this country, but it is hardly straining a point to say that the timeliness of a good historical novel

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may be illustrated by the fact that the country which needlessly and stupidly lost the North American continent, or a large chunk of it, is now bidding for the support of the people who took it away from them, who were, in fact, forced to take it away from them in ways that Mr. Roberts describes with telling effect.

Perhaps, if I may digress a moment, this is the real reason the British have never forgiven us for winning the war and doing pretty well with our affairs afterward. Is it that they cannot forgive themselves for being so completely dumb and dishonest as they proved themselves to be in their dealings with such of their faithful servants as this Major Rogers?

The author of *Northwest Passage* belongs to the classification of historical novelists who believe it is possible to tell a good story without departing from essential facts. Careful research has gone into the present book, and while there may exist some differences of opinion concerning Mr. Roberts' judgment of certain worthies who once lived, one may follow him through his seven hundred-odd pages with the certainty that he has neglected nothing that might give the novel accuracy and credibility.

In fact, for those who may be troubled about the factual basis of the astonishing exploits of Major Rogers, organizer and commander of Roberts' Rangers, spearhead of the attack by the British on the French and their Indian allies, there has been published in a separate volume the text of the documents upon which the novel is founded. These include extracts from Rogers' own *Journals*, from his various petitions to the Crown, from the record of his court martial in Montreal, and also from contemporary histories.

And since Rogers, when he has been discussed at all previously, has usually, as Mr. Roberts says, been re-

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garded as a drunkard and a man of loose morals, there is also in this extra volume, a brief explanation of the probable reason why Rogers' wife divorced him. Some people have thought it was on account of syphilis, a theory Mr. Roberts is inclined to question, but it is hard to dismiss it altogether, because the Major was hotblooded and not at all averse to commerce with the handiest squaw. Not that it matters very much one way or the other.

I have said that in Rogers Mr. Roberts hit upon an essentially romantic hero. The romance of the Major's career was his firm belief in the existence of the Northwest Passage, and his equally firm determination to be the man to discover it. That he did not succeed in his ambition may be attributed largely to the fact that he was a soldier and a straightforward man who could not cope with politicians and men of intrigue; he was not the first lion of his type, nor will he be the last, to be beaten by the weasels.

In order to give the form of fiction to his story of Rogers' adventures and to his study of the character of a born leader of men, Mr. Roberts has resorted to one of the oldest of narrative devices by creating a participant in the career of his historical protagonist, who tells the tale in the first person. This Langdon Towne, a Kittery man whose artistic inclinations make him a puzzle to family and friends, who had the typical American suspicion of the arts which still persists, is an interesting person in his own right, and while he sometimes seems to know more than he should, he remains an attractive and credible early American.

Book One of the novel appeared separately in the *Saturday Evening Post* as a serial, and remains for many readers the high point in the whole narrative, of which it forms somewhat less than half. It is based upon Major

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Rogers' expedition from Crown Point to Saint Francis, the purpose of which was the extermination of a whole village of dangerous Indians. It succeeded, and as an account of a military march and the overcoming of every kind of handicap and peril, Mr. Roberts' description of it is simply magnificent. He has added all that is needed in the way of color to the bare outline of an epic anabasis, and his story is often breathlessly gripping.

But to me the interest of the story did not lessen when Rogers and the handful of surviving Rangers, ancestors of many other irregular American troops that have fought so bravely in most wars, reached Crown Point and reported the success of their mission, the opening of a vast stretch of fertile territory to white colonization.

There is a vigorous and wholesome masculinity about *Northwest Passage* that comes as a refreshing note in a fiction that seems more and more to smell of the boudoir, written to be read mainly by women who haven't anything any better to do. Mr. Roberts has never overplayed the sexual element in his novels, regarding sex, and rightly enough, I believe, as something that not every man and woman spend their entire lives thinking and talking about. In fact, women have very little to do with *Northwest Passage* at all, and the only one of the few who appear that would find herself at ease in a modern novel is a blonde hussy named Jenny Coit, who proves herself a tender nurse to one of Rogers' wounded men on the long march back from Saint Francis, and then, having touched his masculine heart, quits him cold for an Indian. Plainly, Jenny was one of the early worshippers of the primitive, a pioneer Mabel Dodge Luhan.

Some critics of Mr. Roberts' book, I notice, have called into question his handling of Indians. To me, they are as natural a lot of Indians as I have ever read about, and

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seemed as real as the Chickasaws and Cherokees I used to know as a small boy in Mississippi. They are looked at honestly and portrayed realistically. It is true that their spiritual and esthetic aspects may seem to be neglected, but Langdon Towne, as much as he loved to paint redskins had not the advantage of having read D. H. Lawrence, it is well to remember.

Northwest Passage is a fine story, told with a full appreciation of the fictional values of the historical material. It clearly establishes its author if not as a great novelist, at least as a thoroughly dependable narrator of intelligently selected episodes from our past.

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Contributors' Column

Harold B. Hinton continues his discussion of our neutrality policy in this Quarter. When Mr. Hinton wrote "Neutrality — with Bated Breath" for the Autumn issue, events in the Far East and in Europe had not so emphatically threatened America's isolation. "The Further Course of Neutrality" attempts to catch up on rapidly developing tests of our Neutrality act. As our readers will remember, Mr. Hinton is a member of the Washington Bureau of the New York Times and an expert on neutrality legislation.

No other critic in America has done for the other arts what *John Martin* has done for the dance, through his reviews and comment in the New York Times. Almost alone, he interprets one of our most important art forms to the public. Besides being dance critic on the Times, he has written two books, "The Modern Dance" and "America Dancing," is a member of the faculty of the New School for Social Research, the Bennington School of the Dance at Bennington, and the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.

During his researches for his recent book, "Henry Clay; Spokesman of the New West," published by Houghton, Mifflin, *Bernard Mayo* became interested in Matthew Lyon, who mirrored the robust spirit of the early republic, and was properly called "The Lyon from Vermont." Several years ago Mr. Mayo's enthusiasm for some of the minor figures in American history resulted in articles on Anthony Butler and Richard Mentor Johnson, but for the past five years Henry Clay has occupied most of his time and he is now at work on the second volume of his Clay trilogy. He is professor of American history in the graduate school of Georgetown University.

Felix Belair, Jr., has been a member of the Washington staff of the New York Times since 1930. For the most part, he has been assigned to the economic field and since 1933 has specialized in agricultural policy and programs.

Professor of English at Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin, *Warren Beck* has only this year begun to write short stories. "Unity, Coherence, and . . ." was one of the first to be accepted for publication. Another, "Encounter on a Parnassian Slope," appeared in Story magazine.

Ezra Pound, born in the state of Idaho of English parents, now lives and writes in Rapallo, and is probably best known to Americans for his Imagist poems and his Cantos. His "Fifth Decad of Cantos" is being published this winter by Farrar and Rinehart.

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It is fitting that our greatest living naturalist, *Donald Culross Peattie*, should send forth this plea for the preservation of our forests in his article "Trees." He is living in Santa Barbara, California, at the present time, there to make a study of the big trees and to finish his book called "A Flora for Laymen," a consideration of all that science knows about plant life. Two books by Mr. Peattie were published this past year, one by Putnam, "A Book of Hours," and one by Simon and Schuster, "Green Laurels." He has only recently gone west from Tryon, North Carolina, where he lived for some time studying the natural life of the country and developing a preserve for the wild game of the region.

Because he is an Englishman who has lived for some time in America, *George Dangerfield* is equipped to make a comparison of the kinds of "Invisible Censorship" that operate in the two democracies. Mr. Dangerfield is a lecturer and writer in history and a frequent contributor to THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. His article, "The Insistent Past," appeared in our Spring issue.

In the Summer issue of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, *Mason Wade* wrote a careful analysis of the poetry of Archibald MacLeish. In this issue he considers the novels of John Dos Passos. Mr. Wade, a recent graduate of Harvard, is a free lance editor and critic and is at present working on a book about the influence of Catholicism on English and American writers since the War.

Among the essays devoted to a discussion of books, *Amos Pinchot*, Liberal leader and political economist, gives a much needed exact definition of "The Liberal Position" in the nation's present political line-up.

Julia Peterkin says she is a housekeeper, a mother, a country woman, not a writer. Nevertheless we know her as the author of "Scarlet Sister Mary" which earned the Pulitzer prize, "Bright Skin," and "Roll Jordan Roll." From her plantation in South Carolina, no one can better give "One Southern View-Point."

Lloyd Morris is a familiar and welcome reviewer to our pages, and so likewise is *Herschel Brickell*, book-reviewer also for the New York Post.

Since our Winter issue is published during the Christmas season we prefer to call our collection of poetry "Poems for Peace" rather than poems against war. Certainly they are both. *Gerard Previn Meyer* was graduated from Columbia University in 1930 and is at present a government clerk. He writes us that he has this to say about the war

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crisis: "And, above all, we must beware of hate. . . . The enemy is hate — from whatever source, and to whatever seeming good. The difference, ultimately, is not about ends, but about means; and hate is a means which will corrupt any end." *Tristram Livingstone's* poetry has appeared before in THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. Now, after ten years in the Boston Symphony orchestra, he is doing special work at Harvard University under Robert Hillyer. *Audrey Wurdemann* is a poet also well known to our readers. Her last volume of verse was called "Splendor in the Grass." *James Gilmer Wharton* is a native North Carolinian, the practice of whose physician father extended into the countryside around the Bentonville battlefield. At present he is a reporter on the Anniston Star, Anniston, Alabama. *Louise Burton Laidlaw* has had two volumes of verse published by Dodd, Mead, "Wishing on a Comet" and "Traveler of Earth." *John Padovano* was born in Italy, but came to this country in his early teens. He is a concert pianist and teacher and broadcasts twice weekly from Boston.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF MARCH 3, 1933

Of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, published quarterly at Concord, New Hampshire, for October 1, 1937.

STATE OF NEW YORK } ss.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared John Pell, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: The North American Review Corporation, 597 Madison Avenue, New York; Editor: *John Pell, 597 Madison Avenue, New York*; *Managing Editor: Ruth Pickering, 597 Madison Avenue*, New York; Business Manager: James H. Van Alen, 597 Madison Avenue, New York.

2. That the owners are: Edgar B. Davis, Luling, Texas; Walter B. Mahony, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

JOHN PELL, *Editor.*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 24th day of September, 1937.

R. A. KELLEY, *Notary Public.*

(My commission expires March 30, 1938.)

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